Nihilism

“Nihilist” redirects here. For other uses, see Nihilism (disambiguation) and Nihilist (disambiguation).

Nihilism (/ˈnɪlɪzəm/ or /niː.ɪlɪzəm/; from the Latin nihil, nothing) is a philosophical doctrine that suggests the lack of belief in one or more reputedly meaningful aspects of life. Most commonly, nihilism is presented in the form of existential nihilism, which argues that life is without objective meaning, purpose, or intrinsic value. Moral nihilists assert that morality does not inherently exist, and that any established moral values are abstractly contrived. Nihilism can also take epistemological or ontological/metaphysical forms, meaning respectively that, in some aspect, knowledge is not possible, or that reality does not actually exist.

The term is sometimes used in association with anomie to explain the general mood of despair at a perceived pointlessness of existence that one may develop upon realising there are no necessary norms, rules, or laws. Movements such as Futurism and deconstruction, among others, have been identified by commentators as “nihilistic”.

Nihilism is also a characteristic that has been ascribed to time periods: for example, Jean Baudrillard and others have called postmodernity a nihilistic epoch, and some Christian theologians and figures of religious authority have asserted that postmodernity and many aspects of modernity represent a rejection of their theistic doctrine entails nihilism.

1 Forms of nihilism

Nihilism has many definitions, and thus can describe philosophical positions that are arguably independent.

1.1 Metaphysical nihilism

Main article: Metaphysical nihilism

Metaphysical nihilism is the philosophical theory that concrete objects and physical constructs might not exist in the possible world, or that even if there exist possible worlds that contain some concrete objects, there is at least one that contains only abstract objects.

An extreme form of metaphysical nihilism is commonly defined as the belief that nothing exists as a corresponding component of the self-efficient world. The American Heritage Medical Dictionary defines one form of nihilism as “an extreme form of skepticism that denies all existence.” A similar position can be found in solipsism; however, the solipsist affirms whereas the nihilist would deny the self. Both these positions are considered forms of anti-realism.

1.2 Epistemological nihilism

Main article: Epistemological nihilism

Epistemological nihilism is a form of skepticism in which all knowledge is accepted as possibly untrue or unable to be known. Additionally, morality is seen as subjective or false.

1.3 Mereological nihilism

Main article: Mereological nihilism

Mereological nihilism (also called compositional nihilism) is the position that objects with proper parts do not exist (not only objects in space, but also objects existing in time do not have any temporal parts), and only basic building blocks without parts exist, and thus the world we see and experience full of objects with parts is a product of human misperception.

This interpretation of existence must be based on resolution. The resolution with which humans see and perceive the “improper parts” of the world is not an objective fact of reality, but is rather an implicit trait that can only be qualitatively explored and expressed. Therefore, there is no arguable way to surmise or measure the validity of mereological nihilism. Example: An ant can get lost on a large cylindrical object because the circumference of the object is so large with respect to the ant that the ant effectively feels as though the object has no curvature. Thus, the resolution with which the ant views the world it exists “within” is a very important determining factor in how the ant experiences this “within the world” feeling.

1.4 Existential nihilism

Main article: Existential nihilism
Existential nihilism is the belief that life has no intrinsic meaning or value. With respect to the universe, existential nihilism posits that a single human or even the entire human species is insignificant, without purpose and unlikely to change in the totality of existence. The meaninglessness of life is largely explored in the philosophical school of existentialism.

1.5 Moral nihilism

Main article: Moral nihilism

Moral nihilism, also known as ethical nihilism, is the meta-ethical view that morality does not exist as something inherent to objective reality; therefore no action is necessarily preferable to any other. For example, a moral nihilist would say that killing someone, for whatever reason, is not inherently right or wrong.

Other nihilists may argue not that there is no morality at all, but that if it does exist, it is a human construction and thus artificial, wherein any and all meaning is relative for different possible outcomes. As an example, if someone kills someone else, such a nihilist might argue that killing is not inherently a bad thing, or bad independently from our moral beliefs, because of the way morality is constructed as some rudimentary dichotomy. What is said to be a bad thing is given a higher negative weighting than what is called good: as a result, killing the individual was bad because it did not let the individual live, which was arbitrarily given a positive weighting. In this way a moral nihilist believes that all moral claims are void of any truth value. An alternative scholarly perspective is that moral nihilism is a morality in itself. Cooper writes, “In the widest sense of the word ‘morality’, moral nihilism is a morality.”[11]

1.6 Political nihilism

Main article: Political nihilism

Political nihilism, a branch of nihilism, follows the characteristic nihilist’s rejection of non-rationalized or non-proven assertions; in this case the necessity of the most fundamental social and political structures, such as government, family, and law. An influential analysis of political nihilism is presented by Leo Strauss.[12]

1.6.1 Russian nihilist movement

Main article: Nihilist movement

The Russian Nihilist movement was a Russian trend in the 1860s that rejected all authority.[13] Their name derives from the Latin nihil, meaning “nothing”. After the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881, the Nihilists gained a reputation throughout Europe as proponents of the use of violence for political change. The Nihilists expressed anger at what they described as the abusive nature of the Eastern Orthodox Church and of the tsarist monarchy, and at the domination of the Russian economy by the aristocracy. Although the term Nihilist was first popularised by the German theologian Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743–1818), its widespread usage began with the 1862 novel Fathers and Sons by the Russian author Ivan Turgenev. The main character of the novel, Eugene Bazarov, who describes himself as a Nihilist, wants to educate the people. The “go to the people – be the people” campaign reached its height in the 1870s, during which underground groups such as the Circle of Tchaikovsky, the People’s Will, and Land and Liberty formed. It became known as the Narodnik movement, whose members believed that the newly freed serfs were merely being sold into wage slavery in the onset of the Industrial Revolution, and that the middle and upper classes had effectively replaced landowners. The Russian state attempted to suppress the nihilist movement. In actions described by the Nihilists as propaganda of the deed many government officials were assassinated. In 1881 Alexander II was killed on the very day he had approved a proposal to call a representative assembly to consider new reforms.

2 History

2.1 19th century

The term nihilism was first used by Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi (1743–1819). Jacobi used the term to characterize rationalism[14] and in particular Immanuel Kant’s “critical” philosophy to carry out a reductio ad absurdum according to which all rationalism (philosophy as criticism) reduces to nihilism—and thus it should be avoided and replaced with a return to some type of faith and revelation. Bret W. Davis writes, for example, “The first philosophical development of the idea of nihilism is generally ascribed to Friedrich Jacobi, who in a famous letter criticized Fichte’s idealism as falling into nihilism. According to Jacobi, Fichte’s absolutization of the ego (the ‘absolute I’ that posits the ‘not-I’) is an inflation of subjectivity that denies the absolute transcendence of God.”[15] A related but oppositional concept is fideism, which sees reason as hostile and inferior to faith.

With the popularizing of the word nihilism by Ivan Turgenev, a new Russian political movement called the Nihilist movement adopted the term. They supposedly called themselves nihilists because nothing “that then existed found favor in their eyes”.[16]
2.2 Kierkegaard

Main article: Philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard

Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) posited an early form of nihilism, to which he referred as levelling.[17] He saw levelling as the process of suppressing individuality to a point where the individual’s uniqueness becomes non-existent and nothing meaningful in his existence can be affirmed:

Levelling at its maximum is like the stillness of death, where one can hear one’s own heartbeat, a stillness like death, into which nothing can penetrate, in which everything sinks, powerless. One person can head a rebellion, but one person cannot head this levelling process, for that would make him a leader and he would avoid being levelled. Each individual can in his little circle participate in this levelling, but it is an abstract process, and levelling is abstraction conquering individuality.


Kierkegaard, an advocate of a philosophy of life, generally argued against levelling and its nihilist consequence, although he believed it would be “genuinely educative to live in the age of levelling [because] people will be forced to face the judgement of [levelling] alone.”[18] George Cotkin asserts Kierkegaard was against “the standardization and levelling of belief, both spiritual and political, in the nineteenth century [and he] opposed tendencies in mass culture to reduce the individual to a cipher of conformity and deference to the dominant opinion.”[19]

In his day, tabloids (like the Danish magazine Corsaren) and apostate Christianity were instruments of levelling and contributed to the “reflective apathetic age” of 19th century Europe.[20] Kierkegaard argues that individuals who can overcome the levelling process are stronger for it and that it represents a step in the right direction towards “becoming a true self.”[18][21] As we must overcome levelling,[22] Hubert Dreyfus and Jane Rubin argue that Kierkegaard’s interest, “in an increasingly nihilistic age, is in how we can recover the sense that our lives are meaningful”.[23]

Note however that Kierkegaard’s meaning of “nihilism” differs from the modern definition in the sense that, for Kierkegaard, levelling led to a life lacking meaning, purpose or value,[20] whereas the modern interpretation of nihilism posits that there was never any meaning, purpose or value to begin with.

2.3 Nietzsche

Main article: Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche

Nihilism is often associated with the German philoso-
phr. Friedrich Nietzsche, who provided a detailed diagnosis of nihilism as a widespread phenomenon of Western culture. Though the notion appears frequently throughout Nietzsche's work, he uses the term in a variety of ways, with different meanings and connotations, all negative. Karen Carr describes Nietzsche's characterization of nihilism "as a condition of tension, as a disproportion between what we want to value (or need) and how the world appears to operate."[24] When we find out that the world does not possess the objective value or meaning that we want it to have or have long since believed it to have, we find ourselves in a crisis.[25] Nietzsche asserts that with the decline of Christianity and the rise of physiological decadence, nihilism is in fact characteristic of the modern age.[26] though he implies that the rise of nihilism is still incomplete and that it has yet to be overcome.[27] Though the problem of nihilism becomes especially explicit in Nietzsche's notebooks (published posthumously), it is mentioned repeatedly in his published works and is closely connected to many of the problems mentioned there.

Nietzsche characterized nihilism as emptying the world and especially human existence of meaning, purpose, comprehensible truth, or essential value. This observation stems in part from Nietzsche's perspectivism, or his notion that “knowledge” is always by someone of some thing: it is always bound by perspective, and it is never mere fact.[28] Rather, there are interpretations through which we understand the world and give it meaning. Interpreting is something we can not go without; in fact, it is something we need. One way of interpreting the world is through morality, as one of the fundamental ways that people make sense of the world, especially in regard to their own thoughts and actions. Nietzsche distinguishes a morality that is strong or healthy, meaning that the person in question is aware that he constructs it himself, from weak morality, where the interpretation is projected on to something external. Regardless of its strength, morality presents us with meaning, whether this is created or 'implanted,' which helps us get through life.[29]

Nietzsche discusses Christianity, one of the major topics in his work, at length in the context of the problem of nihilism in his notebooks, in a chapter entitled “European Nihilism”. [30] Here he states that the Christian moral doctrine provides people with intrinsic value, belief in God (which justifies the evil in the world) and a basis for objective knowledge. In this sense, in constructing a world where objective knowledge is possible, Christianity is an antidote against a primal form of nihilism, against the despair of meaninglessness. However, it is exactly the element of truthfulness in Christian doctrine that is its undoing: in its drive towards truth, Christianity eventually finds itself to be a construct, which leads to its own dissolution. It is therefore that Nietzsche states that we have outgrown Christianity “not because we lived too far from it, rather because we lived too close.”[31] As such, the self-dissolution of Christianity constitutes yet another form of nihilism. Because Christianity was an interpretation that

posed itself as the interpretation, Nietzsche states that this dissolution leads beyond skepticism to a distrust of all meaning.[32][33]

Stanley Rosen identifies Nietzsche’s concept of nihilism with a situation of meaninglessness, in which “everything is permitted.” According to him, the loss of higher metaphysical values that exist in contrast to the base reality of the world, or merely human ideas, gives rise to the idea that all human ideas are therefore valueless. Rejecting idealism thus results in nihilism, because only similarly transcendent ideals live up to the previous standards that the nihilist still implicitly holds.[34] The inability for Christianity to serve as a source of valuating the world is reflected in Nietzsche’s famous aphorism of the madman in The Gay Science.[35] The death of God, in particular the statement that “we killed him”, is similar to the self-dissolution of Christian doctrine: due to the advances of the sciences, which for Nietzsche show that man is the product of evolution, that Earth has no special place among the stars and that history is not progressive, the Christian notion of God can no longer serve as a basis for a morality.

One such reaction to the loss of meaning is what Nietzsche calls passive nihilism, which he recognises in the pessimistic philosophy of Schopenhauer. Schopenhauer's doctrine, which Nietzsche also refers to as Western Buddhism, advocates a separating of oneself from will and desires in order to reduce suffering. Nietzsche characterises this ascetic attitude as a “will to nothingness”, whereby life turns away from itself, as there is nothing of value to be found in the world. This mowing away of all value in the world is characteristic of the nihilist, although in this, the nihilist appears inconsistent.[36]

A nihilist is a man who judges of the world as it is that it ought not to be, and of the world as it ought to be, and of the world as it is that it ought not to be. According to this view, our existence (action, suffering, willing, feeling) has no meaning: the pathos of “in vain” is the nihilists’ pathos — at the same time, as pathos, an inconsistency on the part of the nihilists.

— Friedrich Nietzsche, KSA 12:9 [60], taken from The Will to Power, section 585, translated by Walter Kaufmann

Nietzsche’s relation to the problem of nihilism is a complex one. He approaches the problem of nihilism as deeply personal, stating that this predicament of the modern world is a problem that has “become conscious” in him.[37] Furthermore, he emphasises both the danger of nihilism and the possibilities it offers, as seen in his statement that “I praise, I do not reproach, [nihilism’s] arrival. I believe it is one of the greatest crises, a moment of the deepest self-reflection of humanity. Whether man recovers from it, whether he becomes master of this crisis, is
a question of his strength!" According to Nietzsche, it is only when nihilism is overcome that a culture can have a true foundation upon which to thrive. He wished to hasten its coming only so that he could also hasten its ultimate departure.\[26\]

He states that there is at least the possibility of another type of nihilist in the wake of Christianity’s self-dissolution, one that does not stop after the destruction of all value and meaning and succumb to the following nothingness. This alternate, ‘active’ nihilism on the other hand destroys to level the field for constructing something new. This form of nihilism is characterized by Nietzsche as “a sign of strength,”\[39\] a wilful destruction of the old values to wipe the slate clean and lay down one’s own beliefs and interpretations, contrary to the passive nihilism that resigns itself with the decomposition of the old values. This wilful destruction of values and the overcoming of the condition of nihilism by the constructing of new meaning, this active nihilism, could be related to what Nietzsche elsewhere calls a ‘free spirit’\[40\] or the \textit{Übermensch} from \textit{Thus Spoke Zarathustra} and \textit{The Anti-christ}, the model of the strong individual who posits his own values and lives his life as if it were his own work of art. It may be questioned, though, whether “active nihilism” is indeed the correct term for this stance, and some question whether Nietzsche takes the problems nihilism poses seriously enough.\[41\]

\section*{2.5 Postmodernism}

Postmodern and poststructuralist thought question the very grounds on which Western cultures have based their ‘truths’: absolute knowledge and meaning, a ‘decentralization’ of authorship, the accumulation of positive knowledge, historical progress, and certain ideals and practices of humanism and the Enlightenment.

Jacques Derrida, whose deconstruction is perhaps most commonly labeled nihilistic, did not himself make the nihilistic move that others have claimed. Derridean deconstructionists argue that this approach rather frees texts, individuals or organizations from a restrictive truth, and that deconstruction opens up the possibility of other ways
of being. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, for example, uses deconstruction to create an ethics of opening up Western scholarship to the voice of the subaltern and to philosophies outside of the canon of western texts. Derrida himself built a philosophy based upon a ‘responsibility to the other’. Deconstruction can thus be seen not as a denial of truth, but as a denial of our ability to know truth (it makes an epistemological claim compared to nihilism’s ontological claim).

Lytotard argues that, rather than relying on an objective truth or method to prove their claims, philosophers legitimize their truths by reference to a story about the world that can’t be separated from the age and system the stories belong to—referred to by Lyotard as meta-narratives. He then goes on to define the postmodern condition as characterized by a rejection both of these meta-narratives and of the process of legitimation by meta-narratives. “In lieu of meta-narratives we have created new language-games in order to legitimize our claims which rely on changing relationships and mutable truths, none of which is privileged over the other to speak to ultimate truth.” This concept of the instability of truth and meaning leads in the direction of nihilism, though Lyotard stops short of embracing the latter.

Postmodern theorist Jean Baudrillard wrote briefly of nihilism from the postmodern viewpoint in *Simulacra and Simulation*. He stuck mainly to topics of interpretations of the real world over the simulations of which the real world is composed. The uses of meaning was an important subject in Baudrillard’s discussion of nihilism:

> The apocalypse is finished, today it is the precession of the neutral, of forms of the neutral and of indifference...all that remains, is the fascination for desertlike and indifferent forms, for the very operation of the system that annihilates us. Now, fascination (in contrast to seduction, which was attached to appearances, and to dialectical reason, which was attached to meaning) is a nihilistic passion par excellence, it is the passion proper to the mode of disappearance. We are fascinated by all forms of disappearance, of our disappearance. Melancholic and fascinated, such is our general situation in an era of involuntary transparency.

### 2.6 Transcendental nihilism / methodological naturalism

In *Nihil Unbound: Extinction and Enlightenment*, Ray Brassier maintains that philosophy has avoided the traumatic idea of extinction, instead attempting to find meaning in a world conditioned by the very idea of its own annihilation. Thus Brassier critiques both the phenomenological and hermeneutic strands of Continental philosophy as well as the vitality of thinkers like Gilles Deleuze, who work to ingrain meaning in the world and stave off the “threat” of nihilism. Instead, drawing on thinkers such as Alain Badiou, François Laruelle, Paul Churchland, and Thomas Metzinger, Brassier defends a view of the world as inherently devoid of meaning. That is, rather than avoiding nihilism, Brassier embraces it as the truth of reality. Brassier concludes from his readings of Badiou and Laruelle that the universe is founded on the nothing, but also that philosophy is the “organon of extinction,” that it is only because life is conditioned by its own extinction that there is thought at all. Brassier then defends a radically anti-correlationist philosophy proposing that Thought is conjoined not with Being, but with Non-Being.

### 3 Nihilism and culture

#### 3.1 Dada

The term *Dada* was first used by Richard Huelsenbeck and Tristan Tzara in 1916. The movement, which lasted from approximately 1916 to 1922, arose during World War I, an event that influenced the artists. The Dada Movement began in Zürich, Switzerland – known as the “Niederdorf” or “Niederdörfl” – in the Café Voltaire. The Dadaists claimed that Dada was not an art movement, but an anti-art movement, sometimes using found objects in a manner similar to found poetry. The “anti-art” drive is thought to have stemmed from a post-war emptiness. This tendency toward devaluation of art has led many to claim that Dada was an essentially nihilistic movement. Given that Dada created its own means for interpreting its products, it is difficult to classify alongside most other contemporary art expressions. Hence, due to its ambiguity, it is sometimes classified as a nihilistic *modus vivendi*.

#### 3.2 Literature

The term “nihilism” was actually popularized by Ivan Turgenev in his novel *Fathers and Sons*, whose hero, Bazarov, was a nihilist and recruited several followers to the philosophy. He found his nihilistic ways challenged upon falling in love. Anton Chekhov portrayed nihilism when writing *Three Sisters*. The phrase “what does it matter” or such variants is often spoken by several characters in response to events; the significance of some of these events suggests a subscription to nihilism by said characters as a type of coping strategy.
Ayn Rand vehemently denounced nihilism as an abdication of rationality and the pursuit of happiness which she regarded as life’s moral purpose. As such, most villains are depicted as moral nihilists including Ellsworth Munckton Toohey in The Fountainhead who is a self-aware nihilist and the corrupt government in Atlas Shrugged who are unconsciously driven by nihilism which has taken root in the books depiction of American society with the fictional slang phrase “Who is John Galt?” being used as a defeatist way of saying “Who knows?” or “What does it matter?” by characters in the book who have essentially given up on life.

The philosophical ideas of the French author, the Marquis de Sade, are often noted as early examples of nihilistic principles.

### 3.3 Music

In Act III of Shostakovich’s opera "Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District", a nihilist is tormented by the Russian police.

A 2007 article in The Guardian noted that "...in the summer of 1977, ...punk's nihilistic swagger was the most thrilling thing in England."[63] The Sex Pistols' God Save The Queen, with its chant-like refrain of “no future”, became a slogan for unemployed and disaffected youth during the late 1970s. Their song Pretty Vacant is also a prime example of the band's nihilistic outlook. Other influential punk rock and proto-punk bands to adopt nihilistic themes include The Velvet Underground, The Stooges, Misfits, Ramones, Johnny Thunders and the Heartbreakers, Richard Hell and the Voidoids, Suicide and Black Flag.[63]

Industrial, black metal, death metal, and doom metal music often emphasize nihilistic themes. Explorers of nihilistic themes in heavy metal include Black Sabbath, Metallica, Marilyn Manson, Slayer, KMFDM, Opeth, Alice in Chains, Godflesh, Celtic Frost, Ministry, Autopsy, Dismember, Motörhead, Nine Inch Nails, Bathory, Decapitated, Darkthrone, Emperor, Tool, Meshuggah, Candlemass, Morbid Saint, Kreator, Morbid Angel, Sepultura, Exodus, Entombed, Death, Mayhem, Nevermore, Dark Angel, Dissection, Nihilist, Weaking, Obituary, Electric Wizard, Eyehategod, Pantera, Sleep, Xasthur, At the Gates and the band Turbonegro have a song called TNA (The Nihilistic Army), which is solely in reference to outlying principles of nihilism.[64][65][66]

### 3.4 Film

Three of the antagonists in the 1998 movie The Big Lebowski are explicitly described as “nihilists,” but are not shown exhibiting any explicitly nihilistic traits during the film. Regarding the nihilists, the character Walter Sobchak comments “Nihilists! Fuck me. I mean, say what you want about the tenets of National Socialism, Dude, at least it’s an ethos.”[67] The 1999 film The Matrix portrays the character Thomas A. Anderson with a hollowed out copy of Baudrillard’s treatise, Simulacra and Simulation, in which he stores contraband data files under the chapter “On Nihilism.” The main antagonist Agent Smith is also depicted frequently as a nihilist, with him ranting about how all of peace, justice and love were meaningless in The Matrix Revolutions.[68] The 1999 film Fight Club also features concepts relating to nihilism by exploring the contrasts between the artificial values imposed by consumerism in relation to the more meaningful pursuit of spiritual happiness.

In keeping with his comic book depiction, The Joker is portrayed as a nihilist in The Dark Knight, describing himself as “an Agent of Chaos” and at one point burning a gigantic pile of money stating that crime is “not about money, it’s about sending a message: everything burns.” Alfred Pennyworth states, regarding the Joker, “Some men aren’t looking for anything logical, like money—they can’t be bought, bullied, reasoned or negotiated with—some men just want to watch the world burn.”[69]

### 3.5 Video games

Although the character Barthandelus from Final Fantasy XIII is not referred to as nihilistic in the game itself, he is referred to as such in the Fighting Fate entry for Theatrhythm Final Fantasy.[70]
5 Notes

[1] Alan Pratt defines existential nihilism as “the notion that life has no intrinsic meaning or value, and it is, no doubt, the most commonly used and understood sense of the word today.” Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

[2] Bazarov, the protagonist in the classic work Fathers and Sons written in the early 1860s by Ivan Turgenev, is quoted as saying nihilism is “just cursing”, cited in Encyclopaedia of Philosophy (Macmillan, 1967) Vol. 5, “Nihilism”, p14 ff. This source states as follows: “On the one hand, the term is widely used to denote the doctrine that moral norms or standards cannot be justified by rational argument. On the other hand, it is widely used to denote a mood of despair over the emptiness or triviality of human existence. This double meaning derive from the fact that the term was often employed in the nineteenth century by the religiously oriented as a club against atheists, atheists being regarded as ipso facto nihilists in both senses. The atheist, it was held [by the religiously oriented], would not feel bound by moral norms; consequently, he would tend to be callous or selfish, even criminal” (at p. 515).

[3] Phillips, Robert (1999). “Deconstructing the Mass”. Latin Mass Magazine (Winter). For deconstructionists, not only is there no truth to know, there is no self to know it and so there is no soul to save or lose.” and “In following the Enlightenment to its logical end, deconstruction reaches nihilism. The meaning of human life is reduced to whatever happens to interest us at the moment…


[5] For example, Leffel, Jim; Dennis McCallum. “The Postmodern Challenge: Facing the Spirit of the Age”. Christian Research Institute. …the nihilism and loneliness of postmodern culture...


[10] Alan Pratt defines nihilism as “the belief that all values are baseless and that nothing can be known or communicated.” Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy


[21] Kierkegaard, Soren. The Sickness Unto Death


[27] F. Nietzsche, KSA 12:10 [142]

[28] F. Nietzsche, KSA 13:14 [22]


[30] F. Nietzsche, KSA 12:5 [71]

[31] F. Nietzsche, KSA 12:2 [200]

[32] F. Nietzsche, KSA 12:2 [127]


This “will to nothingness” is still a willing of some sort, because it is exactly as a pessimist that Schopenhauer clings to life. See F. Nietzsche, On the Genealogy of Morals, III:7.

F. Nietzsche, KSA 12:7 [8]


F. Nietzsche, KSA 12:9 [35]


“What remains unquestioned and forgotten in metaphysics is being; and hence, it is nihilistic.”, UTM.edu, visited on November 24, 2009.

Müller-Lauter, Heidegger und Nietzsche, p. 268.


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6 REFERENCES

Primary texts


Secondary texts


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- Harries, Karsten (2010), Between nihilism and faith: a commentary on Either/or, Walter de Gruyter Press.


7 External links

- Radiolab - In The Dust Of This Planet, Radiolab podcast on nihilism and popular culture.
8.2 Images

- File:Conscience_and_law.jpg Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d6/Conscience_and_law.jpg License: Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0
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