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# AN EARLY HISTORY OF NOTHINGNESS IN PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT

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## ABSTRACT

The question of Nothingness was always asked in the history of philosophy at the sidelines of philosophical thought. Yet there is another tradition beginning with Plotinus and ending with Mainländer, where Nothingness is given priority or is instrumental in making other concepts like being, essence and God distinct. The intention of the text is to demonstrate that nothingness, through its denial or its affirmation, plays an important role in the conceptualization of being and occupies a central place, which is necessary to recover, in the philosophical tradition.

Keywords: Nothingness, God, Being

## Introduction

One reason to revive the question of Nothingness is that we have forgotten that it has been an important question in the past. The question of nothingness has been concealed, feared, or denied throughout the history of human thought. Nothingness seems to show itself as the antithesis of our human desire *to be* and *to have*. But there are thinkers

within the philosophical and theological tradition that see Nothingness as the source and sustainer of being and having. Nothingness is the space of potencies, of new beginnings, of the birth of new ideas, and human and cosmic creativity.

In order to demonstrate the disparities and links between the different authors conceptions of nothingness, a brief journey regarding their lines of thinking will be undertaken. Initially, the attention travel from the concept of One of Plotinus to the ideas of nothingness in Eckhart. It will proceed to the metaphysical abandonment of Pascal, and its denial undertaken by Leibniz. Then, Jacobi's, idea of the unreality of our knowledge and Schelling's assertion that *nothingness is*, will be examined. Especially important and overlooked by the tradition is Leopardi's belief that nothingness constitutes the beginning and source of all existence; and Schopenhauer's approach which considers nothingness as outside of our will. Finally, the article will conclude with a consideration of two opposing positions: the theist position, where the anguish which derives from nothingness leads one to a belief in God, represented by Kierkegaard; and the non-theist position, which finds its main representatives in Mainländer and Nietzsche.

## **1. One and Nothingness in Plotinus**

Plotinus gave one of the first philosophical considerations of Nothingness, seeing it as the most profound thing which man can aspire to. Nothingness has a central place in relationship to the One.<sup>1</sup> This is so particularly in relation to art. Givone observes that his system “reaches an irreducible esthetic value, the development of which leads not only to recognize that the truth-liberty nexus is founded on Nothingness, but that encourages the consideration of this foundation in the breast of art”.<sup>2</sup>

The One, like Nothingness, is a *letting-be*; more than a creative act, it empowers Being itself. The One is, then, an indirect creator and its creation is free, since “its act does not point toward a determined thing, but rather is identical to itself; not a duality, then, but a unity”.<sup>3</sup> The One is preceded by nothingness, for he writes “to nothing it is bound and in no

sense is it contingent, which is why it can be said that it is Nothingness itself.<sup>4</sup>

Later, in the tradition beginning with Augustine of Hippo, passing through Bonaventure, and Saint Thomas, the topic of Nothingness was excluded from the center of infinite being which they called God. This dominated Christian thought until Eckhart.

## **2. Meister Eckhart and the Divine Nothingness**

It is the Dominican Meister Eckhart (1260-1327) who develops something truly novel in contrast to the thousand years that preceded him. He contends that God is not something to be defined against Nothingness, but one and the same reality. This allows for a metaphorical or poetic consideration of God which is not limited by human categories.

His heterodox vision brought him the criticism of ecclesiastic authorities of his time. But Eckhart knew how to negotiate these controversies which allowed him to die at peace with the church. Eckhart's thought clearly demonstrates an overcoming of Thomist metaphysics and assumes that the Deity can only be represented in silence; in such a manner that "God wants to have the temple empty, so that there can be nothing in there that is not Him".<sup>5</sup> The Deity contains itself, "expulses ignorance",<sup>6</sup> "shines splendidly",<sup>7</sup> and is a "generating potentiality"<sup>8</sup> that only fructifies when man is "as empty as when he was not yet,"<sup>9</sup> in other words, when man has managed to let go of the images and conceptualizations of God. This is because "he who searches for God according to a manner, takes the manner and forgets God, who hides in the manner".<sup>10</sup> If this is accomplished and man can enter Nothingness, it is there where he can comprehend that "everything that God does is one; that is why he engenders me in as much as his Son without any difference", and it is there when one can "penetrate into God",<sup>11</sup> therefore, "behave as if one were dead" since no longer is anything more important in life than that union with God. That is how "death gives me a Being" since "that proper of God is Being"; and to achieve being in Him, "it is precise to die to the base, so that neither love nor suffering should affect us".<sup>12</sup>

This new life in God, which Eckhart proposes, supposes that one is God oneself, since “that which man loves, that is the man”;<sup>13</sup> It is in silence that everything arises; a Nothingness, but a fertile Nothingness, impregnated with sense. In the eyes of the world, one is seen as poor, “to be who nothing wants, who nothing knows, and who nothing has;”<sup>14</sup> but in the union with God, everything is possessed. God is unmentionable since, “if someone knows God and attributes a name to him, this is not God”, as God is “ineffable”.<sup>15</sup> What we perceive are only his creations. The cosmos is, in this sense, a text that speaks of God but is not God. God should be seen by seeing nothing, like Saint Paul who “saw nothing and that Nothingness was God [for] there is no possible way towards Him [...] God is a Nothingness and God is a something”.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, it is also to be considered as “a way without a way and as much as being without being, for it does not have any way”.<sup>17</sup>

For Eckhart, we do not merely lose ourselves in this Nothingness-Deity, but must return to our daily tasks, just as Christ did, for “there was no member of his body that did not exercise a particular virtue”,<sup>18</sup> in such a way that the contemplation does not exclude and, in fact is complemented, with the exercise of virtue.

### **3. Metaphysical Impotence in Pascal**

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) was a brilliant mathematician, mystic, and writer of Christian polemics. In his *Pensees* [*Pensamientos sobre la religión*], Pascal focused on the problem of the individual existence of man, who is a rational being but fragile and impotent; a “thinking reed” that suffers, but that possesses an eminent dignity among the creatures because he is able to know God.<sup>19</sup> For Pascal, not only does thought or knowledge exist, but also another type of knowledge, of spontaneous or intuitive characteristic. He man as caught in a struggle between two extremes, for man is both a great and miserable being at the same time. The fundamental preoccupation of Pascal was not the knowledge that man can acquire, but rather man himself as a creature who suffers in middle of the intellectual and metaphysical dereliction.

#### 4. Wilhelm Leibniz and the Negation of Nothingness

In contrast to Eckhart, who unites the concepts of the Deity with Nothingness, Leibniz sets them up against each other. In reality, this author doesn't really ask about the possibility of Nothingness but rather centers himself on the question about why things are as they are and are not in a different manner. But the otherness is not evidently the Nothingness of which we speak. For him, behind reality there is not, nor can be, Nothingness; since if it were, then in it would be the reason of being of the things which for Leibniz would be the same as discrediting God himself, as the origin of all existence. The contrast between God and Nothingness is resolved by Leibniz's denial of Nothingness. But by doing this he indirectly affirms the power of Nothingness. This is because "to propose that behind reality there can be nothing, as an alternative to reality itself, means admitting that reality is abysmally unfounded, with everything that this implies. This is to say that, reality would not be over the ultimate reason and over the necessary being as over its own fundament, but rather over the abyss".<sup>20</sup>

This situation is inadmissible according to Leibniz, but it is precisely what I would like to affirm in this study. The theistic posture of the German philosopher does not permit him to consider this possibility. As Givone suggests, the possibility of calling "God" the abyss<sup>21</sup> before exorcizing such abyss, indirectly affirms it.

In Leibniz, through the attempt to diminish Nothingness, the real possibility of Being is highlighted. Therefore, his philosophy is "an elevated bastion against such terrible threat; a vision of light against that which must have seemed a vision of gloom?"<sup>22</sup> In the end, Leibniz's, philosophy is about the Being of the One as the ultimate foundation but points to the source of Being in Nothingness

Naturally, such a recognition of the Absolute Nothingness would not be possible in the approach of Kitaro Nishida,<sup>23</sup> for example, without the rupture of the beliefs of the idols; without the healthy fragmenting of such partial cosmo-visions of the Absolute.

## 5. Jacobi and the Unreal Knowledge of What Is

Friedrich Jacobi (1743-1819) is one of the counter-enlightenment thinkers who begin to reject the enlightenment conception of reason. For Jacobi what we know is not related to what is real, but only generated by human desire. In the same manner God cannot be known, since that which is known of Him – is by the very fact of knowing it – false. He writes that “to know something such as it is in its truth, it is necessary to conceptually grasp it; but doing this means to annihilate it, reduce to nothing its being in itself and, therefore, to invert the objective in the subjective”.<sup>24</sup>

If knowledge of what is, is a deformation of reality, then reality itself is Nothingness since it is never at the mercy of the conceptualizations which attempt to capture it.

Knowledge is the deceit that man assumes in order to suppose that once he has conceptually dominated reality. Truth, as such, is outside of the man who intends to conceive it, which is why such a man must desperately search for his own conceptual annihilation, since it is his own self which prevents him from reaching reality. Man, upon ceasing to be man integrates himself with Nothingness.

The self that is autonomously constituted, contrary to what could be expected, in reality is only:

A reactive function before the vertigo of nothing covering itself it becomes a prisoner of itself, a true curse. In change, if freedom from the self has its origin no longer in the capacity of self-determination but rather in the undetermined, in the absolute, then the experience we undergo here and now, each time we remit the other to the identical, will be a metaphysical figure of real transcendence.<sup>25</sup>

It can be concluded that Jacobi understands Nothingness as a constant companion, on the terrain of knowledge. However, there is still not in the conceptual union between God and Nothingness, such as is suggested with Meister Eckhart and in the school of Kyoto.

#### 4. Friedrich Schelling and the Nothingness that Is

Schelling (1775-1854) greatly radicalizes the issue of Nothingness to include it on the plane of philosophy as a synonym of the Being, not as a counterpart, or a duality, but rather as part of Being.

In this German philosopher we find an “authentic nostalgia of nothing[ness]”,<sup>26</sup> The question about the possibility of Nothingness in Schelling must be understood as a question which summons; a question which Givone situates in the following context:

In the face of the desolating spectacle of human history and its relapse into mistake upon mistake, it culminates in a resonance that is like the anguished cry of one whom finds in Nothingness a relief to such absurdity, a detention that soothes the sentiment of the senselessness of everything, a bitter yet effective antidote to the desperate and frustrating condition in which we find ourselves.<sup>27</sup>

Unlike Leibniz, Schelling does not focus on the affirmation of the Being of divinity. Instead, he treats it indirectly as an unmentionable paternity, an impenetrable and nameless power. Hence a great part of liberation consists precisely in liberating oneself from the desire of liberty itself. Hence in Schelling, “liberty reaches a more originary level, where the unfounded foundation of reason is at play, the unfounded foundation of the being: in one word, Nothingness”.<sup>28</sup>

The starting point of what *is*, is not the existent – as Leibniz supposed – but rather the pure potentiality of being: Nothingness. It is not a wanting to be, but only a potentiality of being. Authentic liberty for Schelling is, then, in the ability to not be. Not in the not-being which will pass into the Being, for the not-being cannot be free since it does not yet exist. He writes that “if the potentiality of being remains in itself, the potentiality of being is maintained in relation to the Nothingness from which it comes from and it directs itself towards the not-being before, than to Being, so liberty is safe-kept”.<sup>29</sup> For Schelling, the freedom of Nothingness is the foundation of Being.

It is for this same reason that, “Only the being that has in itself the not-being, shadow of the terrible thickness, allows that movement of liberty which, once and again (infinitely), converts the being into the not-being and the not-being into the being. Liberty is not, but rather this conversion kept safe by Nothingness”.<sup>30</sup>

In the end, Being and Nothingness are inseparably bound to the point that Nothingness is placed as a foundation of Being. And if this is so, it is also the foundation of any change and development of Being itself.

## **5. Nothingness as a Beginning and Source in Leopardi**

More radical is the work of Giacomo Leopardi (1798-1837) who recognizes in Nothingness the origin and beginning of all things. For him, Nothingness is that towards which everything tends; final abyss of all the existent. He considers that “the beginning of God himself is Nothingness”.<sup>31</sup> The things emerge from the lap of Nothingness and come to the Being with the only intention of returning to Nothingness, which is why “to emerge from Nothingness and to submerge oneself there is the primary evidence of the things”.<sup>32</sup>

There isn't any reason either for something that is not to be such as it is, or not to be absolutely. The absolute is an abyss, capable of annihilating everything, which is why the Nothingness of the end is the same as the Nothingness of the beginning. That is why “Nothingness makes things to be as they are: fragile, ephemeral, mortal, but exactly because to it, worthy of being loved in their reality, suspended over a double denial.”<sup>33</sup> Even what we understand as truth coincides with the non-truth and is converted one into the other. Being and Nothingness coincide with one another.

Very appreciable is the following text, extracted from his piece *Dialogo de Tristano e di un Amico* [*Dialogue between Tristan and a friend*]:

The human gender will never believe to not know anything, to be nothing, to not be able to come to reach anything. No philosopher that teaches one of these three things would make a fortune nor make a sect, especially amongst the people because, far from these three things being scarce for the purpose of who would want to live; the first two offend the haughtiness of men, the third, though after the others, requires courage and strength of spirit in order to be believed.<sup>34</sup>

We can only creatively interpret the world since we only know fantasies. We are Nothingness and we are headed towards Nothingness. The failure of Western history of ideas to recognized Leopardi's thought proves, paradoxically, the veracity of his words.

After reading Leopardi's ideas concerning Nothingness, the reader could remain dumbfounded. But I propose it has a value for an alternate way of approaching human development. Development begins with a radical Binding Nothingness with the fulfillment of the person allowing a new understanding of self. In fact, according to Givone, the disenchantment taken to its final consequences constitutes the only opportunity [...] of the "ultra-philosophy that is the key of the ultra-Nihilism".<sup>35</sup>

Ultra-philosophy is what Leopardi understands as the reconciliation with nature and with the intimacy of things; in other words, "knowing the Nothingness from which they come and into which they will be cast",<sup>36</sup> in such a way that Nothingness is an opportunity to understand the world that surrounds us, to give a new sense to the life that summons us, to forge the way that we are to travel in our veiled existence.

## **6. The Nothingness Outside of the Will in Schopenhauer**

Naturally, I am to refer as well to Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) who, once has considered the will of the individual as the beginning of the representations of the world, and recognizes that what we see does not constitute in reality, in any manner, what is. The world is, then, a representation which, in any case, is also the representation of each

individual in a particular manner. The only reality is the will, the one which conditions our conception of the world.

Nothingness, from this perspective, is precisely that which remains once we have exiled the will. This is to say, outside of the world of representations, Nothingness is what remains – unbound, by it – of our same representation. The representation is “the reality which has been constructed from a determined cognitive system, with its own coordinates and limits”.<sup>37</sup> Hence, if Nothingness is outside of the representation, it is because it is precisely previous to the representation and subsequent to the world of the representations. That is why the human will is limited, for the tendency or line in which the representations are to be constructed based on that same will, are always limited, in context, partial, human.

The will is the metaphysical principle that identifies the self, which is why Schopenhauer assumes that every *self* has a will; even further, that the self is will. Therefore, it is to be understood that when it is affirmed that Nothingness is that which is further than the will, it is also assumed that that same Nothingness is beyond the self; and that the self, as will, is an obstacle to the comprehension of the Nothingness of which I speak.

In the same manner, since the world itself is a manifestation of the human wills and these are the obstacle to the Absolute Nothingness, it is understood that suicide could be considered as an escape from the world of the will. Contrary to it, Schopenhauer warns that by living, a salvation from the tedium and boredom of life can be found. Amongst the things that the German philosopher proposes specifically for the eradication of the tedium towards life, is the uninterested contemplation of art, at the same time foundation of its esthetics. He also proposes the practice of compassion, support of his ethics. Furthermore, he suggests the overcoming of the self through an ascetic life centered on self-control. Therefore, if we speak of the consequences that the comprehension of Nothingness has for the contemporary man, we are then to refer to these contributions.

## 7. Nothingness as a Preamble to Everything in Kierkegaard

The Danish philosopher Kierkegaard (1813-1855) wrote, among others, a fundamental piece titled *The Concept of Anxiety* [*El concepto de la angustia*] in which he presents a peculiar anthropological concept: that of the man in anguish by his own loneliness. He recognizes that ethical theories are limited by their rationalism, which is why man cannot ultimately find spiritual fulfillment in them. From this perspective it is not the rational explanation of things which gives us tranquility in the face of existential anguish, but instead the relationship with God, which is something that flows from the interior of the soul.

Religion does not imply laws or communities a personal communication or binding with the Supreme Being. This is even echoed in Bertrand Russell who writes that, “The existence of God, must be captured existentially because the demonstrations that move in the kingdom of the essence cannot establish that existence, no matter how abundant they may be”.<sup>38</sup>

In such a way, man finds himself alone before himself. And from this solitude flows the anguish which presides his existence. Harald Höffding affirms that Kierkegaard’s most important contribution to ethics is his description of the so called “stages of life”.<sup>39</sup> These stages are three: the aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. The travel from one to the other is done “by a leap”; in other words, by virtue of an impulse “to think subjectively”, to think each time with greater force and as a function of existence.

In his theory of knowledge, Kierkegaard affirms that knowledge can neither deplete nor span the whole of existence, and that because of this, new enterprises need to be continually undertaken in thought. In *Philosophical Fragments* [*las Migajas filosóficas*] we can read his critique that the rationalist attempt to explain the world, loses the most essential. This essential is bound to the divinity and to the saving message that is found in It.

What we could call vital impregnation of thought is, then, one of the most characteristic theses of Kierkegaard’s philosophy. After having

developed, in this way, that truth can only be captured and affirmed in a subjective and personal manner, that truth is subjectivity, Kierkegaard inverts the phrase and concludes: “Subjectivity is the truth because only that which is apprehended with subjective passion and energy can be true”.<sup>40</sup>

This thesis of Kierkegaard contains the existentialist affirmation that truth only has value when we appropriate it by affirming it, through personal impulse or passion. From this perspective, the personal value of truth is the decisive one. The criterion consists in the movement that is awoken within interior life. In this sense, the contemplation of Nothingness proposed here can only be lived as a subjective experience, intimately personal.

In his piece *Fear and Trembling* [*Temor y temblor*] he writes:

All of humanity’s life rounds itself, then, and takes the form of a perfect sphere where morality is at the same time the limit and the content. God is transformed into an invisible point and is dissipated like a thought without force; its power is only exercised in the morality that fills life. Therefore, if a man imagines himself loving God in a sense different to this one that has just been indicated, he would divert, he loves a ghost.<sup>41</sup>

The above supposes that Kierkegaard renounces a specific manner of a relationship with God through the practice of an ethics. From this earthly perspective, God is an invisible point. In my perspective, man is the visible point in the invisibility of the Nothingness which possesses us. That Nothingness is only graspable in a state of contemplation. Such a state does not involve the elimination difficulties, which is why Kierkegaard emphasizes the difficulty of the path:

The gentleman of faith does not have any support other than himself; he suffers for not being able to make himself be understood, but he does not feel any vain necessity of

guiding others. His pain is his security; he ignores the vain desire, his soul is far too serious for that. The false gentleman betrays himself by that ability, acquired in an instant. He does not absolutely comprehend that if another individual must follow the same path, he should come to be an individual exactly in the same way, without consequently having the need for direction from anybody and, above all, from he who intends to impose himself.<sup>42</sup>

Here we are prepared for the next step taken by Nietzsche.

## **8. Nothingness as Power in Nietzsche**

In contrast to Kierkegaard, with Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) we find ourselves with the man who confronts the presence of faith and assumes it as an obstacle to his own development. With Nietzsche, the influence of Schopenhauer continues to be demonstrated and is, perhaps, the most representative of the nihilistic thinkers, whose activity concluded in 1889 when he lost his reason.

Before him, Schopenhauer formulated the theory of the will to live, affirming that such a will is an evil, something that damages man upon conditioning him. Nietzsche begins with this thesis, but deriving from it the opposite conclusion: that which is fundamental, the definitive value which man should look for is the intensification and elevation of his own existence. Nietzsche returns to Heraclitus' idea concerning the eternal return of things and events, but without giving it a fatalistic content, since man can go about transforming the world he lives in just as he can transform himself. This final impulse would bring him close to the superman; in other words, to the man liberated from anguish, possessed with a powerful individuality, capable of overcoming himself and exceeding his own limitations. We move beyond the "morality of slaves" to an aristocratic morality. This involves a criticism of Christian ethics and everything that diminishes the world and the will to power.<sup>43</sup>

The will of the power is a path towards true knowledge. What does Nihilism mean? Nietzsche asks himself and answers: "It is a consequence

of the way in which the values of existence have been interpreted until now [...] the supreme values lose validity”<sup>44</sup> Radical Nihilism is the belief in an absolute devaluation of existence. While we believe in morality, we condemn life.

The conclusion of the principles that Nietzsche presents in the first part of *The Will to Power* [*La voluntad de poder*] is that:

All of the values by which we have attempted until now to make the world worthy of our appreciation, and by which we have precisely despised it when they were shown to be inapplicable; all of these values are, from the psychological point of view, the results of certain useful perspectives, established to maintain and increase the fields of human domain, but falsely projected in the essence of the things.<sup>45</sup>

Nietzsche affirms that knowledge is finally the consequence of searching for a justification before any determined morality. The explanations, even the most argued ones, are a way of bestowing correctness to our personal way of thinking.

Little by little I have come to comprehend that all philosophy is no other thing than the profession of faith of he who creates it; a type of involuntary memories. The moral [or immoral] end constitutes the true vital knot of all philosophy, from which every plant will later come forth. In reality, when one wants to explain to oneself how the most eccentric metaphysical affirmations of this or that philosopher originated, it is prudent to ask: what morality does it serve?”<sup>46</sup>

In this manner, the writer of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* [*Así hablaba Zarathustra*] induces us to conclude that man is – in his intention to provide reason for his thoughts – the one who constructs knowledge, and that such knowledge is at the same time conditioned. Later on, Paul Feyerabend based himself on similar elements to postulate his proposal of epistemological anarchism.

Finally, Nietzsche maintains his nihilistic vision – which is why some leave him out of the existentialist category, in addition to being outside of the historical period – with which he pities the consequent human condition upon affirming that “from any philosophical point of view from which one would want to consider the world in which we believe to live, the most sure and most stable thing is its mistakeness; in confirmation of this, serve many reasons which incite us to conjecture that there exists a deceiving beginning in the essence of the things”.<sup>47</sup>

This deceiving beginning that is the essence of the things is in reality the distortion that our interpretation makes of the things, and since these are in a constant relationship with Nothingness in a constant dialectic. The thought that Nietzsche leaves for us is an invitation to liberation; a total liberation, including our most intimate hopes and desires. Such liberation is only possible by the man who continues to evolve towards a being of greater will and power.

Nietzsche’s influence has a powerful impact on the history of philosophy. It has inspired rejection at the same time as recognition. And it is because Nietzsche:

Has touched neuralgic points of our historical condition; the death of God and the vanishing of traditional values, the loss of the centre and the cutting to pieces of the ancient identities, the radical experience of the negative, and the impracticability of all dialectic synthesis; lastly, the impossibility of allocating a name to totality.<sup>48</sup>

The name of totality – at least the closest to such a notion – is, precisely, that of Nothingness.

## **9. Philipp Mainländer and Paul Bourget**

The leading representatives of Nihilism in nineteenth century are Philipp Mainländer (1841-1876) and Paul Bourget (1852-1935). The first stands out for his piece *Die Philosophie der Erlösung* or *Philosophy of Redemption* in which, influenced by Schopenhauer, he assumes

Nothingness beginning with the premise: “The not-being is preferable to the Being”. He concludes that the existent is called to death as a natural tendency, more than even one’s own life. Few know, for example, that the affirmation about the death of God and the consequent life of the world is not originally Nietzsche’s, but was previously referred to by Mainländer who, in fact, decided to commit suicide once his piece was published.

Paul Bourget emphasized some of contemporary life’s fatal consequences, and illustrated with precision the decay of the social models of his time. He assumes that social decay consists in the independence of the individuals, and that this decay allows, however, aesthetic values and personal artistic productivity to stand out. The decaying artist extracts spiritual and aesthetic nourishment from the manifestations of social decay. In some way, the loss of the world gives the artist contact with his imperturbable side which, at the same time, makes him sensitive to superior realities. Neither Mainländer nor Bourget have been given the recognition they deserve in Western philosophy.

## **Conclusion**

The consideration of Nothingness implies a new perspective. Nothingness has been seen with different faces; always modeled by human subjectivity, by religious interests, or by topical fears. We have covered it with veils; and we fear the unveiling of Nothingness. This has made us understand it as contrary to Being; as the counterpart of that which is most laudable and dignified in the human being; as if with it there were no further motives to keep on living; when, in reality, it is from Nothingness that we can have the possibility of the re-enchantment of the world.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Vid. Plotino, *Enéadas*, III, 8, 10.
- <sup>2</sup> Givone, *Historia de la Nada*, p.79.
- <sup>3</sup> Plotino, *op. cit.*, VI, 8, 20.
- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 8, 21.
- <sup>5</sup> Eckhart, M., “El templo vacío” en *El fruto de la nada y otros escritos*, p.35.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.36.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p.38.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.40.
- <sup>9</sup> Eckhart, M., “La virginidad del alma” en *El fruto de la nada y otros escritos*, p.41.
- <sup>10</sup> Eckhart, M., “Vivir sin porque” en *El fruto de la nada y otros escritos*, p. 49.
- <sup>11</sup> Eckhart, M., “Dios y yo somos uno” en *El fruto de la nada y otros escritos*, pp.54-55.
- <sup>12</sup> Eckhart, M., “El anillo del ser” en *El fruto de la nada y otros escritos*, p.57-59.
- <sup>13</sup> Eckhart, M., “La imagen desnuda de Dios” en *El fruto de la nada y otros escritos*, p.69.
- <sup>14</sup> Eckhart, M., “Los pobres de espíritu” en *El fruto de la nada y otros escritos*, p.75.
- <sup>15</sup> Eckhart, M., “Dios es un verbo que se habla a sí mismo” en *El fruto de la nada y otros escritos*, p.84.
- <sup>16</sup> Eckhart, M., “El fruto de la nada” en *El fruto de la nada y otros escritos*, pp.87-90.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p.93.
- <sup>18</sup> Eckhart, M., “Martha y María” en *El fruto de la nada y otros escritos*, p.111.
- <sup>19</sup> Cfr. Montes de Oca, *Historia de la Filosofía*, p.190.
- <sup>20</sup> Givone, *op. cit.*, p.243.
- <sup>21</sup> *Idem*.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.245.
- <sup>23</sup> Vid. Nishida, *Pensar desde la Nada*, pp.43-100.
- <sup>24</sup> Givone, *op. cit.*, p.219.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p.226.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.247.
- <sup>27</sup> *Idem*.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p.252.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p.253.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p.104.
- <sup>31</sup> Cfr. Leopardi, *Zibaldone de pensamientos*, 1341.
- <sup>32</sup> Givone, *op. cit.*, p.186.

- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p.196.
- <sup>34</sup> Leopardi, *Dialogo de Tristano e di un Amico*, 28-36.
- <sup>35</sup> *Cfr.* Givone, *op. cit.*, p.207
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>37</sup> Sáez, *Pensar desde la nada: Ensayos sobre filosofía y Nihilismo*, p.39.
- <sup>38</sup> Russell, *La sabiduría de Occidente*, pp.254-255.
- <sup>39</sup> *Vid.* Hoffding, *Soren Kierkegaard*, 1930.
- <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p.99.
- <sup>41</sup> Kierkegaard, *Temor y Temblor*, p.76.
- <sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p.90.
- <sup>43</sup> *Vid.* Russell, *op. cit.*, p.259.
- <sup>44</sup> Nietzsche, *La voluntad de poder*, p.33.
- <sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.38-39.
- <sup>46</sup> Nietzsche, *Más allá del bien y del mal*, p.9.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p.38.
- <sup>48</sup> Volpi, *El Nihilismo*, p.86.

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