



**FUTURITY
PHILOSOPHY**

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.57125/FP.2024.12.30.08>

How to cite: Sapkota, M. (2024). Metaphysics of Nihilism: A Philosophical Critique Theories. *Futurity Philosophy*, 3(4), 113-128. <https://doi.org/10.57125/FP.2024.12.30.08>

Metaphysics of Nihilism: A Philosophical Critique

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Received: September 11, 2024 | **Accepted:** November 22, 2024 | **Available online:** December 7, 2024

Abstract. Nihilism, a philosophical approach that objects to the ontological reality of meaningfulness and holism, has diverse interpretations. Following a systematic review method, this study critically examines nihilism from metaphysical viewpoints such as reality, existence, meaning, and value over history and its philosophical trajectory. The exploration, guided by the works of influential philosophers like Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger and more recent theorist ideas, underscores the opposition of metaphysical nihilism to the status quo in traditional forms of philosophy. In so doing, it highlights the philosophically important role of nihilism in contemporary metaphysical debate, engaging the audience in current philosophical debates, its relation to Buddhism, and how influence might unfold in philosophy over time.

Keywords: Nihilism, metaphysics, Nietzsche, Heidegger, meaning, reality, ethics, philosophy, existentialism

Introduction

Nihilism is a complex phenomenon that rejects natural significance, value, and truth as an undertaking towards a critique of traditional metaphysical framework (Gillespie, 1999). Nihilism is based on some of the works done by Friedrich Nietzsche, which has a place within existentialist thought and postmodern philosophies, which fundamentally question reality and existence through some means that critique or unmake structures (realities) from which meanings are derived. Nihilism attempts to come up with an answer (the wrong one); it asks, what is reality? What if life was meant to do so? Are there objective foundations for values? In this sense, nihilism inherently contrasts with any metaphysical tradition emphasising the ordered cosmos primordially governed by rationality, intentionality, and normativity (Hicks, 2004).

Central to Nietzsche's philosophy is the transformative concept of nihilism, famously encapsulated in his proclamation of the 'death of God' (Nietzsche, 1967). This was not a mere critique of theology but a radical challenge to the metaphysical structures, whether religious or philosophical, that had long provided humanity with a sense of identity and direction. According to Nietzsche, the disappearance of objective truths led to a crisis of values, a 'nihilistic abyss' that forced individuals, including Nietzsche himself, to reevaluate the foundations of their beliefs. This confrontation with nothingness and the void of purposes is the essence of metaphysical nihilism, a concept that compels philosophers to consider the unsettling notion that reality may lack inherent meaning (Nietzsche, 1967).

Metaphysical nihilism, in stark contrast to the above illustrative examples of expressions of scepticism and rejection, is a concept that often evokes discomfort rather than direct association with psychoanalytical practice (Brandão, 2021; Gillespie, 1999). It confronts the traditional metaphysical systems that attempt to ground existence, value, and truth as secure and objective. For instance, metaphysical traditions rooted in Platonism or Kantian idealism assume a foundational reality—whether through abstract forms, reason, or moral imperatives—that provides coherence to the world (Hicks, 2004). On the other hand, metaphysical nihilism holds that all the above structures are socially constructed, and since there is no truth out there, the world is a construct, arbitrary, and does not make sense (Cox, 2023).

This paper aims to give a comprehensive account of nihilism, with a particular emphasis on its metaphysical implications within the context of the broader debates and systems of philosophy. The review will address critical questions such as: How does nihilism redefine metaphysical inquiry? What implications does nihilism have for existence, value, and reality? However, to what extent did various philosophical pathways react to the threats that nihilism offered? Answering these questions, this review should draw attention to the enduring relevance of nihilism as one of the key themes in modern metaphysical discourses and analyse its shifting function during philosophical developments (Cox, 2023; Sartre, 2007). This article will achieve its heuristic function by systematically reviewing the available literature on metaphysical nihilism to advance understanding of how nihilism has impacted and will continue to define the course of metaphysical philosophy.

Materials and Methods

This systematic review uses a qualitative data analysis focusing on primary and secondary sources discussing metaphysical nihilism. The research angles involve a comprehensive literature review of historical and contemporary philosophical newspapers and books, connecting the reader to the evolution of the subject. These sources embody the works of historical, philosophical master Friedrich Nietzsche, the reputed Martin Heidegger, and postmodern philosopher Jacques Derrida, among others. The material was drawn from peer-reviewed articles from various scientific journals, philosophical books, and critiques, most of which were obtained from the JSTOR, Google Scholar, and Project MUSE databases. To this end, the texts included in the following sources were limited to those that speak directly about the metaphysical aspect of nihilism, including existence, reality, and value. To avoid restrictive coverage, emphasis was given to explanations that contained critical assessments of nihilism about the notion of metaphysics. This comprehensive literature review ensures the thoroughness and reliability of the research, instilling confidence in the reader about the validity of the findings.

The structure of the review reflects the significant strands of Metaphysical Nihilism – the theme of reality, the anti-assertional motif, and the part played by nothingness. Thematic analysis was used to analyse how nihilism has been construed through diverse philosophical schools and to show its relation to broader metaphysical debates. The proposal is to present in the frames of the review texts, which belong to both the classics and modern authors, to outline the development of metaphysical nihilism and determine its place in the contemporary philosophical discourse. This paper's methodology allows for a more methodical analysis of the philosophers' contributions, ensuring a rigorous and systematic approach in formulating and developing the subject of nihilism and consideration of its imperfections and ramifications for meta-philosophical debates. By analysing the modern literature and going back to the roots of metaphysical nihilism in history, this review enunciates how the subject familiar nominates and provokes new poses to the essence infrastructural to philosophical systems: that of meaning and truth (Gillespie, 1999; Hicks, 2004). This systematic approach reassures the reader of the thoroughness and reliability of the research process, instilling confidence in the validity of the findings.

Results and Discussion

Defining the Metaphysics of Nihilism

Nihilism presents a radical and optimistic view of reality, asserting that it lacks inherent meaning, structure, relevance, and purpose. This radical departure from conventional paradigms, such as 'the Absolute' or absolute truth, values, or the essence of being, fundamentally reshapes our understanding of reality (Westerhoff, 2024). It challenges the notion of reality having any essential meaning or value, a concept that is further explored through Nietzsche's concept of the 'eternal return'. This notion suggests that the nonsexist world can effervesce endlessly in every moment, thereby eliminating any final meaning to time or existence. This philosophical exploration of nothingness takes on the characteristics of negative theology. Similarly, Heidegger in *Being and Time* underscores the significance of

'Nothing', stating, 'Being toward death is what keeps Dasein (a concept central to his work) individualized [but] freed for resolution'.

As a philosophy, nihilism has evolved from Nietzsche's critique to today's metaphysical and ontological notion. The ongoing nature of the debates, which are parallel to but run deeper than the original and classical metaphysical analysis of entities, is a testament to the dynamism of the concept and understanding of nihilism. These debates have extended into ontological nihilism (Ebrahimipour, 2021). In contemporary discussions, nihilism also intersects with matters of anxiety and selfhood, which manifest themselves as existentialist constructs (Cropper & Browne, 2024). Furthermore, examining nihilism and these assumptions reveals how nihilism interacts with culture and society, shaping the definition of truth and meaning-making in the age of information abundance (Whan, 2021; Woodward, 2023). Finally, the work in nihilist philosophy in recent years illustrates a broader critique of traditional metaphysical thought and the ever-present challenge of resolving being/non-being (Dershowitz, 2022; Frazier, 2024; Razavizade & Abdolkarimi, 2023).

The metaphysical critique of Nihilism delves deep into the notion of value, casting a mighty shadow. The absence of intrinsic goodness or worth to existence inherently undermines ethical-metaphysical systems and moralities. These systems are based on the presumption of objective value linked to some metaphysical account of how things are objectively understood. This critique raises deep and complex philosophical questions about the nature and value of metaphysics, stimulating intellectual curiosity and engagement.

Nietzsche's philosophical works are a treasure trove of insights into the creation of meaning, human existence, and how one engages in a radically meaningless reality. His ideas significantly contribute to the discussion of Nihilism, shedding light on the complexities of this philosophical concept. The swinging between rejection and construction makes Nihilism a particular phenomenon within the metaphysical/philosophical tradition, as Nietzsche's work from 1887 to 1967 demonstrates. With this discussion, Table 1 summarizes vital characteristics of the nihilist philosophy, enlightening us with the profound significance of Nietzsche's work.

Table 1

Four Major Characteristics of Nihilism

No	Characteristic
1	<i>Denial of intrinsic and rooted meaning:</i> Rejects the concept of meaningful existence, so the world is assumed to be meaningless artefacts.
2	<i>Epistemological skepticism:</i> Questions the assumptions, certainty, and exclusive possession of knowledge, thereby debunking the notion that truth is definitive and not outright constructed.
3	<i>Rejection of absolute morality:</i> Views moral codes, to nihilists, lack universal validity, as all ethical judgments are 'arbitrary'.
4	<i>Individual freedom and responsibility:</i> Stresses independence, not something predestined to have meaning and reality.

Source: Author's development.

Historical Context of Nihilism in Metaphysics

Nihilism began to feature in the 19th-century philosophical discourse. However, it originates in pre-19th century classical philosophical schools of thought that engaged preoccupations of scepticism and ontological questions dealing with existence. Friedrich Nietzsche can be associated with discussing the term as the most significant figure who contributed to it – the so-called death of God symbolical statement (Williamson, 2021). It is important to note that Nietzsche's contributions were pivotal, as he created the conditions for what would later be identified as metaphysical nihilism with his denial of objective reality and positive acceptance of a newly constructed notion of the 'will power' as the way to overcome nihilism. His method changed the assumptions about the possibility of objective morality and posed a tradition that put metaphysicians in the position of having to rethink existence and reality themselves (Toribio Vazquez, 2021).

Nonetheless, Nietzsche's impression was carried out in Heidegger, who designed many metaphysical extents of nothing and being. Indeed, Heidegger's philosophical reflections on existence, especially nothingness, helped Nietzsche elaborate on 'black eternities', a term used to describe the bleak and infinite nature of existence in the absence of inherent meaning. 'Black eternities' refers to a universe devoid of any inherent purpose or meaning, a concept that Nietzsche used to illustrate existence's bleak and infinite nature (Creasy, 2020). While Nietzsche is often credited with defining nihilism in its modern form, earlier philosophical traditions, such as those found in ancient Greek scepticism and strands of Buddhist thought, also engaged with questions about the nature of existence and the possibility that reality may not conform to human expectations of meaning. This historical continuity of nihilism connects us to a rich philosophical lineage, representing both a break with traditional metaphysical thought and a continuity with earlier scepticism by pushing the rejection of objective structures to its logical extreme (Gillespie, 1999; Tartaglia & Llanera, 2020).

Given the popularisation of post-structural and existentialist thought, nihilism still resonates in contemporary philosophy. It is a backdrop for a lively and continual analytic debate surrounding reality and meaning (Cox, 2023). This ongoing debate invites us, as scholars and students of philosophy, to engage with and contribute to the evolving discourse. The connections in each philosophy are summarised and narrated in Table 2 and discussed for an example below:

Existentialism. It is common for the thinkers of existential nihilism to be associated with existentialist philosophy, but existential nihilists deny that life has content — which it must find a value to go on; existence exists without any reason or purpose. While seemingly bleak, this perspective also empowers us as humans, suggesting that we have the responsibility and power to create meaning in life. Existentialist philosophers — such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, sometimes argue that humans must make meaning in life, even though they also say the universe has no inherent value (Camus, 1991).

Post-Structuralism. Nihilism in a post-structural manner involves deconstructing structures and ideology once deemed absolute. As Jacques Derrida put it, meanings are not fixed; they can be dismantled. It also conceives nihilistic views on the non-inherence of meaning (George, 2024).

Analytic Philosophy. Some parts of analytic philosophy look at nihilistic ideas by asking if external realities or meanings exist or can be known. Thinkers such as Ludwig Wittgenstein and some ideas from logical positivism examine how language and logic might support nihilistic conclusions, like the complete lack of meaning or uncertainty in some philosophical questions.

Table 2

Nihilism and other philosophical trends

Philosophy	Core Concept of Nihilism	Influential Thinkers	Key Contributions
Existentialism	Absence of inherent life meaning	Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus	Advocating the creation of personal meaning in an indifferent universe
Post-Structuralism	Deconstruction of absolute structures	Jacques Derrida	Arguing that meanings are constructed and can be deconstructed, no ultimate truth
Analytic Philosophy	Questioning of external realities	Ludwig Wittgenstein, Logical Positivists	Examining the limits of language and the indeterminacy of philosophical discourse

Source: Author's development.

Nihilism, hedonism, and absurdism intersect through their confrontations with life's meaning, yet each offers distinct responses (Kenny, 2012). From the general outlook, critical thinkers of hedonism include Epicurus, Aristippus, Jeremy Bentham, and John Stuart Mill, who focused on pleasure as the central good. At the same time, absurdism's key figures—Albert Camus, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Jean-Paul Sartre—grappled with the tension between humanity's search for meaning and a purposeless universe. Life has no inherent meaning under nihilism, which opposes hedonism's pursuit of immediate personal pleasure by asserting that nothing is meaningful, so there is nothing to bother. Because where hedonism says that pleasure is the only good we should pursue in this life, nihilism asks us if even pleasure matters at all — not necessarily denying its claim as pleasurable (after all, given our first point, science, of course, it makes you feel good) but arguing instead whether it is worth striving for once you step through the door. This philosophical tension situates nihilism as a criticism of hedonism since it critiques happiness and satisfaction in a world lacking all purpose.

Absurdism, like nihilism, confronts the meaninglessness of existence but diverges by embracing human resilience and the potential for personal meaning-making. It encourages not resignation but active defiance against the 'absurd' – the conflict between the search of human beings for purpose and the universe's indifference (Russell, 1945). This defiance is not a futile struggle but a powerful assertion of human agency and the potential for individual meaning in a seemingly meaningless world. Absurdism thus provides a middle path, acknowledging nihilistic insights but arguing for a response that accepts life's absurdity while creating individual meaning. It empowers us to find our meaning in the face of the absurd.

Key Themes in Nihilism

Reality and Existence. Metaphysically, nihilism is the question of reality as meaning and the presence of order in the world. Nihilism rebels against the original acceptance of the belief that the world can be well explained and is unchangeable. Instead, it suggests that deciding what reality is, what it depends on and is shaped like, is multiple and optional. From this pedagogy, reality is desisted as a concrete reality preordained by truths and principles; instead, knowledge is seen as becoming fashioned by how people perceive, experience, and participate in different structures of society (Cox, 2023). This contrasts most pre-Socratic and classical metaphysical traditions, including the Platonic forms and Kantian, which dominate the ideas. Therefore, hate of these basic cultural frameworks gave rise to a nihilistic view of the world as potentially contradictory and meaningless except by human subjectivity (Gillespie, 1999; Sasan, 2023). Nihilists claim everyone is entitled to their reality. Therefore, reality's nature is not fixed and is invariable but constantly evolving, inviting us to engage with it.

Heidegger's analysis of Being (Sein) significantly contributes to this debate, emphasising the rejection of predetermined meaning. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger argues that the concept of nothingness – the absence of inherent meaning- is the key to understanding reality (Heidegger, 1962). He suggests that humans exist in a world without predetermined meaning; hence, to be is to be in a world of nothingness. The description of the void as space and time devoid of substantial forms associated with the real identity (the rejection by nihilism at some point) corresponds to a negation typical for existentialist philosophy. According to Heidegger's understanding, negation opens a further vantage point on what is as such. Whereas metaphysical nihilism argues that nothing exists, the nihility principle states that something could have existed (for instance, a particular possibility) but does not (Braver, 2023).

Value and Ethics. Because metaphysical nihilism denies the existence of intrinsic value, it offers an ethical standpoint in which institutional fact is considered a fluid item for survival and further extension. This has been a subject of debate, with critics suggesting that moral relativism can degenerate into moral nihilism, leading to despair and existential crisis. If there are no absolute truths, then what difference do moral systems make? On the other hand, defenders of nihilism claim that it opens up a way to true existential freedom once we rid ourselves of (externally) imposed moral norms. This is what It means in terms of practicality that moral nihilism opens the gates to self-decided rights and values for us as individuals; such a way through life orientates our actions not by inherited or given roles but with an empowering force into autonomy (Cox, 2023; DuBose, 2020). Similarly, metaphysical nihilism hovers over an ethical rebirth: it exposes to individuals their moral world as one free of intrinsic meaning or direction. It thus calls upon them abruptly to create meaningful notions for themselves.

Nihilism as metaphysical nihilism silences discomfoting questions about what used to be their perfectly sacred concept of value and ethics. If reality is meaningless from the constructivist point of view, then the concepts of moral values and ethical systems are not built in but created. An essential element of the argument is Nietzsche's rejection of received morality, particularly Christianity. Nietzsche, offering the concept of *Übermensch*, claimed that there is no God against the code of modernity, and even the stronger ones cannot do without

values (Nietzsche, 1967). This is typical of metaphysical nihilism, which, as was more than indicated above, posits that moral truth does not exist and that the gentleman makes up values in himself — values and purposes which may be those of his group or society but are not inherent in reality.

By excluding intrinsic value, metaphysical nihilism results in conventional ethical relativity, where formerly rationalised practices are considered deprived of substantial foundations. The debate has arisen here, with opponents of moral relativism claiming that moral nihilism, resulting in despair and existential anxiety, results from this relativism. Others argue that in the absence of strict values, moral frameworks may be subjective in some way or otherwise. In the same breath, advocates of nihilism say that it provides a route to a higher sense of personal liberty, as all unethical directions are eradicated. Thus, moral nihilism becomes an occasion for asserting freedom and a possibility for the existential construction of values with which a person can face life instead of a typeset idea of morality (Cox, 2023). Therefore, metaphysical nihilism poses the issue of deconstruction of ethics for beginners, demanding that people assume responsibility for creating ethical value systems in the society that have no objective value in the minds of the nihilists.

The Void and Nothingness. Since the void or nothingness constitutes one of the leading metaphysical goals of species, it occupies an essential place in metaphysical nihilism. According to Heidegger, a prominent figure in existentialist and phenomenological philosophy, nothingness is not a simple vacuum but a reality of life events that challenge an individual to recall the established concepts of metaphysics (Heidegger, 1962). Desert, in the work of Heidegger, raises questions about the positions of reason that traditionally define metaphysical structures: time, space, and value (Soltanifar & Gandomi Nasrabadi, 2024). Metaphysical nihilism is, however, more nuanced than this discarding of nothingness as flatly negative; for metaphysical nihilism, nothingness is a new sphere of possibilities—an existence freed from how it has been previously conceptualised and understood.

Nevertheless, such absence in metaphysical nihilism can open a prospect of horror or creation. The crisis of metaphysics, the displacement of prior stable and tightly articulated worldviews, is followed by anxiety, nihilism and a search for orientation as people are left in a postmodern cosmological vacuum. This experience resembles the concepts raised by existential philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, who lifted the point that life in a meaningless world is existentially useless and that any meaning to be derived has to be constructed by human beings (Sartre, 2022). However, in metaphysical nihilism, this is the same place where it is stated that people can free themselves from the constraints of these structures and gain the possibility to create new meanings for the existence and existence of meanings. This is doubly so because the void symbolises our worst nightmares and the gateway to the mind and existence.

This opposition of the critical fear and the sphere of possibility connects metaphysical nihilism to postmodernism and Jacques Derrida's opus. Just as has been seen with metaphysical nihilism, postmodernism problematises the foundations of the fixed and 'permanent' metaphysical categories and the notion of truth. Instead, it makes one argue that reality is externally constituted by the impressions and statuses of societies and not determined by

specific objective laws (Derrida et al., 2001). The connection between metaphysical nihilism and postmodernism lies in their shared critique of traditional metaphysical structures and their emphasis on the subjective nature of reality. Indeed, this void is inherent in the concept of metaphysical nihilism as being positive because it breaks up inherited forms and shapes and opens up new ways of existence and signification. Finally, the abyss is a significant field of despair and a starting point for philosophical freedom and diversity – for reconstructing the world without predefined meanings.

Buddhist Darshan of Śūnyatā and the Western Concept of Nihilism

Śūnyatā of the Buddhist concept and nihilism of the Western philosophical approach are shown as the two concepts dealing with the issues of emptiness and refutation of intrinsic significance. However, these ideas diverge significantly in their intellectual goals, interpretations, and implications (Dahal, 2024; Strelkova, 2020).

Śūnyatā in Buddhist Thought. In Mahayana Buddhism, Śūnyatā represents the absence of intrinsic essence or 'self-nature' (*svabhāva*) in all things. It is a concept that reflects the idea that nothing exists independently or permanently; everything is interconnected and dependent on causes and conditions (*pratītyasamutpāda*) (Sapkota, 2022; Williams, 2008). The term 'emptiness', often used to translate Śūnyatā, can be misleading. It does not imply a nihilistic void but rather a continuous flowing reality where nothing exists separately — independently or as fixed facts. This 'emptiness' highlights the interconnectedness of all things rather than a lack of substance.

Nothing of this is possible for someone who has not sensed the reality or realisation called Śūnyatā since it means wisdom and liberation from dukkha. By understanding the empty nature of everything, people are released from attachment and the mistaken perception that there is a permanent self, enabling them to perceive all things as they are (Garfield, 1995; Nelson, 2022a). To realise this is understood as a positive and transformative development whereby humanity changes into kindness, understanding often termed enlightenment. Freedom is partly a discovery in that way of the void or emptiness. However, it should not be misunderstood as denying existence since śūnyatā means vacuous, and freedom here suggests no intrinsically existent things – which makes good sense from a self-organizational view aiding spiritual liberation.

Nihilism in Western Philosophy. Western nihilism and, of course, Nietzschean nihilism refer to a nihilism that does not recognise any inherent meaning, purpose, or value in life. Nietzsche's nihilism rose to fame with the proclamation of the death of God – an assault on the traditional religious and metaphysical things that governed the purpose of human life for many years (Nietzsche, 1968). As each pillar crumbles, so does man's sense of purpose, resulting in nihilism, a void that Nietzsche terms the 'nihilistic abyss,' a metaphorical chasm of meaninglessness and despair.

It is important to note that nihilism, particularly in the Western context, is often associated with existential fear and moral decay in existentialism. This places a significant burden on the individual to construct their values and, consequently, the purpose of life. Some existentialists, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, have argued that people not only exist but have deliberately imposed

a sense of meaninglessness on their world (Sartre, 2007). This reflection of nihilism can lead to a deep understanding of confusion, as individuals are left to their own devices in their quest to create meaning in their lives, highlighting the power of personal agency in this philosophical shift.

Comparing Śūnyatā and Nihilism. Indeed, both, on the one hand, *Śūnyatā*, and the other – nihilism, should be considered phenomena denying the concept of inherent essence or meaning; however, the approaches and conclusions of these concepts are starkly different. These are abstract ideas and concepts with profound implications for our understanding of the world and our place in it. The contrast between these two philosophical concepts is significant, and it is this weight that we must grapple with in our exploration of their implications. Accordingly, in Buddhism, *Śūnyatā* does not inspire pessimism and hopelessness of existence but is a means of escape and non-attachment (Nelson, 2022b; Oh, 2022; Williams, 2008). Buddha underscored that the understanding of emptiness substantially facilitates the attainment of the state beyond attachment and, thus, contributes to receiving wisdom and compassion. Such realisation gives a fresh perception of the act and power of reality as a whole, having a link and action with something.

There, however, are differences involving existential nihilism that postulates or involves questions about meaninglessness that were mainly put to Western thought by Nietzsche and seen in existentialist thought. Nihilism, which emerged in the 19th century, entails a world of relativity and makes people accept a world full of relativistic realities and unending values, where people will experience such states as existential angst (Nietzsche, 1967). The historical depth of nihilism, rooted in the 19th century, adds a layer of complexity to our understanding of its implications. Whereas Nietzsche thought this process presented an avenue for affirming life and the rise of new values, it is widely linked to ethical and ontological pessimism. Whereas *Śūnyatā* can liberate man, nihilism induces feelings of emptiness or directionlessness.

The central contrasting aspect between these two frameworks is the approach toward the concept of emptiness. Thus, the idea of *Śūnyatā* is considered to grant spiritual liberation and give a notion of the mind's ground truth. This is in the context of dependent arising, which refers to the Buddhist understanding that all phenomena arise in dependence upon other phenomena, and impermanence, which is the recognition that all things are constantly changing. While existentialism, which emphasises individualism and freedom, mostly accentuates the existence of a meaningless world, nihilism stresses the nothingness of values and man's efforts to find sense in a senseless world. On the concept of emptiness, while *Śūnyatā* is the path to attaining wisdom and liberation, nihilism remains in question and nullifies profound established principles and orders.

Critiques of Metaphysical Nihilism

Nonetheless, nihilism has been criticised enormously due to its distinctive effect on the contemporary metaphysical perspective. Metaphysical nihilism, the belief that nothing exists beyond the physical world, has been a subject of critique, particularly its impact on motivation and philosophical discourse. Critics argue that it leads to despair, indifference, and a rejection of constructive thinking. If reality is meaningless and values are merely constructs, then questions of philosophy and ethics might be considered pointless. With the theoretical

background of Russian novelist and philosopher Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821–1881), a nihilist argument can be made that a society with no moral code will degenerate. The lack of rules leads to chaos and a non-purposeful existence. He further postulates that actors find themselves with no purpose and meaning where everything becomes allowed because the world they live in cannot answer the fundamental question of why they should exist. This critique situates nihilism as an epistemological overtone and an adversative force in culture and society (Gillespie, 1999; Keel, 2023; Marsden, 2022).

Said critics include Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida, and those philosophical opinions have transcended into different ethical nihilism. Regarding the threat of nihilism, they state that such attitudes do not imply ethical despair or a lack of commitment to values and work. Levinas, for instance, is very sure that facing nothingness does not free us from ethical responsibility, and it is in the face of nothingness that proper ethical responsibility emerges. This emphasis on ethical responsibility fosters a sense of connection and value in the audience. Likewise, regarding the concept of nihilism as the path to moral indifference, Derrida's deconstruction implies that far from inevitably purging one of the ability to enter into ethical relationships with others, the destruction of metaphysical scaffolding reveals new ways of being responsible for others. In this vision, rejecting the fact of nihilism is not the same thing as moral nihilism but rather indicates the possibility of a contextual exit that transforms ethics into a human creation built through interaction and ethical experience (Derrida et al., 2001; Levinas, 1969).

Realists have criticised nihilism, holding that the facts of reality and existence are absolute. However, the facts about reality might be bitter to swallow. However, in the eyes of realists, including critical feminists, nihilism overemphasises meaninglessness. It does not allow multifaceted potentialities and objective meanings to be revealed in the external world (i.e. spectators and observers) (Brennan, 2021). According to them, it could be good to agree that though there are some propositions by which metaphysical truths are entailed, which may be abstract, profound, and challenging to discover, it will not do to say that they do not exist just because we do not know them. Pessimists argue that those realists who deny the existence of objective truth build nihilism on an excessively negative and relativistic outlook on life. However, they provide arguments for moderation because of the problems with the philosophy of the cosmos, insisting on discovering the primary hypotheses. This realist critique is a reminder that nihilism is willing to call into profound question just about everything. This willingness may put the brakes on philosophical work that could otherwise go very deep indeed into the nature of the real and the human, sparking a sense of intrigue and engagement in the audience (Bayındır, 2023; Hicks, 2004).

Limitations of the Study

Nihilism has been a staple subject of both existential and post-modern philosophy. Coming from the criticism of traditional metaphysics, Nietzschean nihilism, a term derived from the works of Friedrich Nietzsche, is a byproduct of this critique and, thus, an offshoot that challenges the authenticity and value of established norms, morals, and beliefs. Nietzschean nihilism, in particular, is a philosophical concept that questions the existence of actual value or truth itself, suggesting that life has no intrinsic meaning and can be considered meaningless.

This philosophical position is associated with the crisis of faith in religion and metaphysics, which holds that artificial moral codes, truth, and even being are all conventions. While nihilism is powerful in its deconstructive abilities, the claim to meaninglessness has liberated some while leading others to the 'nihilistic abyss,' a metaphorical term for a severe existential crisis. A profound sense of meaninglessness and despair characterises this crisis. Although it serves as an unguided view to question the implicit morals of society and provides insight into the instability of our value systems, unyielding nihilism is not without its vices: It quickly spirals into cynicism, which lacks identity and can ultimately fracture both mental health on the individual scale and communal stability on a collective one.

The most significant drawback to nihilism is its paradox, which proves true. Nihilism inherently undercuts itself by denying all beliefs and thus all truths — after all, a truth claim of 'there are no absolute truths' is an absolute truth claim. Additionally, the sheer totalizingness of nihilism may block productive dealing with reality and thus hinder constructive work in developing favourable, affirmative structures for creating meaning. This limitation creates a kind of resignation or confusion, making it more challenging to construct an integrated worldview, which is essential for living and being in society. These disadvantages can colour the broader conception of nihilism, making it more like pessimism or despair than anything substantive philosophically. However, such a simplistic understanding may play down how nihilism cautions against some of the fundamental beliefs humans adopt. Therefore, it is crucial to recognise the importance of nihilism in contemporary philosophy, as it serves as a cautionary tale, exposing the destructive power of meanings and warning us against the potential dangers of our beliefs.

Conclusions

Nihilism, a philosophical viewpoint that denies the existence of inherent meaning and value in life, represents the most radical and darkly challenging perspective available to intellectual inquiry. Its profound roots keep our search for positive purpose grounded. Nihilism denies the possibility of intrinsic amount, that limits may be found and inquiries have an answer; it compels existential options or correlations with fundamental philosophical queries: either brutality (if you are a stoic) or foundation. Yet, in its very denial of inherent meaning, nihilism liberates the interpretation of reality from the constraints of objective truth, empowering each individual to face the world with a fresh perspective. While initially terrifying, this rejection frees us from the burden of ultimate meaninglessness. Metaphysical nihilism, far from being a wrecking ball, is an approach that invites reflection into questions about existence and our human quest for meaning, offering a path to intellectual freedom.

A closer examination of metaphysical nihilism leads one to conclude that far from suppressing philosophical inquiry, it can be a tremendous incubator for fresh ideas. Nihilism forces thinkers to confront nihility as such: meaning and purpose must be designated elsewhere from a priori truths, which are known to be true independent of experience. This eternal struggle with the void cultivates an intellectual and metaphysical approach to creativity. The concepts in nihilism are vast and metaphysically complex, and even though philosophical discourse may have outgrown it, it has continued to be a worthwhile discussion area. Newer thinkers, with their unique perspectives and possibilities around metaphysics, have kept the

discussion around metaphysical nihilism alive and relevant. It can change our view of reality and the course of esoteric thought and maintain us in a lively intellectual dialogue.

Suggestions for Future Research

A different angle on nihilism can be the emerging intersections with nuances such as exploring nihilism's relevance in light of existential anxiety that has plagued modern society and its connection to mental health, namely the problem of youth depression, suicide ideation/attempts, etc. Future research must delve into the specific role of nihilism within various cultural and social contexts and provide cross-cultural comparisons between Western and Eastern philosophical traditions about tendencies toward nihilism. We might also be able to use the conception of "constructive nihilism" as a framework), which may allow us to move beyond nihilistic deadlock by rejecting inherited meaning while allowing space for systems of value amongst each other that we can create on our own). Ideas from different disciplines — psychology, cultural studies, political theory — would help us understand how a form of nihilism might constitute an individual life in the post-modern world, thereby solving the issues of absurdity and crisis of identity.

Acknowledgements

None.

Conflict of Interest

None.

Funding

The Author received no funding for this research.

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