

being and nothingness

being and nothingness is a philosophical concept that has intrigued thinkers for centuries and remains central to existentialist thought today. Delving into the nature of existence, consciousness, and the void, "being and nothingness" explores what it means to be, and how nothingness shapes human reality. This article presents an in-depth analysis of the origins, development, and implications of "being and nothingness" in philosophy, with particular attention to Jean-Paul Sartre's seminal work and its impact on modern thought. Readers will discover how these concepts influence identity, freedom, and authenticity, while also examining their relevance in contemporary society and psychology. Whether you're a philosophy enthusiast or simply curious about the existential questions that define human life, this comprehensive guide will provide valuable insights and clarity. Continue reading to explore the intricacies of "being and nothingness" and their enduring significance.

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Origins and Historical Context of Being and Nothingness

The concepts of being and nothingness have deep roots in Western philosophy, tracing back to ancient Greek thinkers. Philosophers like Parmenides and Plato pondered the nature of reality and nonexistence, contributing fundamental ideas that would be revisited by later generations. In the Middle Ages, scholars such as Thomas Aquinas discussed being in relation to God and existence, while nothingness was often equated with the absence of divine presence.

With the advent of modern philosophy, the focus shifted from metaphysical speculation to more subjective and phenomenological inquiries. German philosophers Martin Heidegger and Friedrich Nietzsche played pivotal roles in redefining being and nothingness, setting the stage for existentialism's emergence in the 20th century. This evolution reflects humanity's changing perspective on existence, individual meaning, and the void.

Jean-Paul Sartre and the Existentialist Approach

Jean-Paul Sartre is perhaps the most influential figure associated with "being and nothingness." His 1943 book, "Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology," revolutionized existentialist thought by examining consciousness, freedom, and the human condition. Sartre argued that existence precedes essence, meaning individuals define themselves through actions rather than inherent qualities.

Central to Sartre's philosophy is the belief that human beings are "condemned to be free." This radical freedom arises from the interplay between being (the fact of existence) and nothingness (the void or lack that enables choice and change). Sartre's existentialism emphasizes personal responsibility, authenticity, and the anxiety that comes with true freedom.

Sartre's Conceptual Framework

Sartre distinguishes between "being-in-itself" (the existence of things) and "being-for-itself" (consciousness). "Being-in-itself" is static and solid, while "being-for-itself" is fluid, defined by its awareness and capacity for negation – the ability to conceive of what is not. This negation is the source of nothingness, making consciousness a dynamic interplay between presence and absence.

Key Philosophical Themes: Being, Nothingness, and Consciousness

Understanding being and nothingness requires a closer look at the core philosophical themes involved. These concepts are not merely abstract but shape the way individuals experience the world and themselves.

Defining Being

Being refers to existence itself – the fact that something is present and real. Philosophers have debated whether being is a property, a process, or simply a fundamental aspect of reality. In existentialism, being is the starting point for all inquiry, as it forms the foundation for human experience and meaning.

Understanding Nothingness

Nothingness, by contrast, represents absence, void, or nonexistence. Sartre posited that nothingness is not just the lack of being but an active force within consciousness. It is the space that enables choice, possibility, and change, allowing individuals to transcend their current state and pursue new futures.

Consciousness and Negation

Consciousness is intimately tied to nothingness through the process of negation. By recognizing what is not, consciousness separates itself from pure being and asserts its freedom. This capacity for negation is what enables self-awareness, reflection, and the pursuit of goals beyond immediate existence.

- Being is the ground of existence and experience.
- Nothingness introduces possibility, change, and freedom.
- Consciousness mediates between being and nothingness through negation.
- Existential anxiety results from confronting the void and personal responsibility.

Freedom, Responsibility, and Authenticity

Freedom is a central theme in existentialist thought, arising from the tension between being and nothingness. Sartre argued that because nothingness is present within consciousness, individuals are continuously faced with choices and the responsibility to define themselves. This freedom is both liberating and daunting, as it demands authenticity and accountability for one's actions.

The Burden of Freedom

With freedom comes the burden of responsibility. Sartre believed that individuals cannot escape their freedom, even when attempting to conform to external expectations or societal norms. This realization often leads to existential angst – a deep sense of anxiety about the weight of one's choices and the lack of predetermined meaning.

Living Authentically

Authenticity means embracing one's freedom and acting in accordance with genuine values, rather than succumbing to "bad faith" or self-deception. For Sartre, authenticity is the path toward meaningful existence, as it involves acknowledging the reality of being and nothingness, and actively shaping one's identity through conscious decisions.

Influence on Modern Thought and Society

The influence of "being and nothingness" extends far beyond academic philosophy. Sartre's ideas have shaped literature, psychology, theology, and cultural studies, prompting new ways of thinking about identity, morality, and social responsibility. Existentialism's emphasis on freedom and personal meaning resonates in contemporary debates about authenticity, mental health, and ethical decision-making.

Authors, artists, and filmmakers frequently draw on existential themes to explore the complexity of human existence. The concepts of being and nothingness have inspired movements for social change, encouraging individuals to challenge oppressive systems and seek genuine self-expression.

Psychological Perspectives

From a psychological standpoint, being and nothingness offer valuable insights into human motivation, anxiety, and self-concept. Existential psychology, pioneered by figures like Viktor Frankl and Rollo May, builds upon Sartre's ideas to address the search for meaning and the confrontation with mortality.

Therapists often use existential principles to help clients navigate feelings of emptiness, alienation, or indecision. By embracing the reality of nothingness and the necessity of choice, individuals can develop greater resilience and a deeper sense of purpose.

1. Existential therapy encourages confronting life's uncertainties.
2. Self-awareness is fostered by recognizing freedom and responsibility.
3. Authenticity leads to improved mental health and life satisfaction.

Frequently Asked Questions about Being and Nothingness

Q: What is the main idea behind "being and nothingness"?

A: The main idea is that existence (being) and nonexistence (nothingness) are fundamental aspects of reality and consciousness. Jean-Paul Sartre's work explores how nothingness enables freedom and choice, making individuals responsible for defining their own essence.

Q: How did Jean-Paul Sartre redefine "being and nothingness"?

A: Sartre distinguished between "being-in-itself" (the objective existence of things) and "being-for-

itself" (consciousness). He argued that nothingness is central to consciousness, allowing humans to transcend their circumstances and act freely.

Q: Why is nothingness important in existentialist philosophy?

A: Nothingness creates the space for possibility, change, and freedom, making it essential for existentialist thought. It allows individuals to imagine alternatives and make meaningful choices.

Q: How does "being and nothingness" relate to authenticity?

A: The concept urges individuals to act authentically by embracing their freedom and responsibility. Authenticity means making conscious choices that reflect one's true values, rather than conforming to societal expectations.

Q: What is existential anxiety according to Sartre?

A: Existential anxiety arises from confronting the freedom and responsibility inherent in human existence. It is the discomfort of realizing that meaning is not predetermined and must be created through personal choices.

Q: Can "being and nothingness" influence mental health?

A: Yes, existential themes are often used in therapy to help individuals address feelings of emptiness, alienation, or indecision. Embracing freedom and responsibility can foster resilience and a stronger sense of purpose.

Q: How do artists and writers use the concept of "being and nothingness"?

A: Many creative works explore existential themes, using the tension between being and nothingness to examine identity, meaning, and the human condition.

Q: Is "being and nothingness" relevant to everyday life?

A: Absolutely. The ideas influence how people understand themselves, make decisions, and seek fulfillment in a world without predetermined meaning.

Q: What is "bad faith" in Sartre's philosophy?

A: "Bad faith" refers to self-deception, where individuals deny their freedom and responsibility by conforming to societal roles or expectations instead of acting authentically.

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Being and Nothingness: Exploring Sartre's Existentialist Masterpiece

Introduction:

The concept of "being and nothingness" might sound like the stuff of philosophical nightmares, but it's actually a fascinating exploration of human existence. This isn't some dry academic exercise; it's a dive into the heart of what it means to be human, grappling with freedom, responsibility, and the inherent absurdity of our condition. This post will unpack Jean-Paul Sartre's seminal work, *Being and Nothingness*, breaking down its core arguments in an accessible way and examining its lasting impact on philosophy and beyond. We'll explore key concepts like being-in-itself, being-for-itself, and anguish, revealing how they illuminate our everyday experiences. Prepare to confront the unsettling truth of your own existence—and perhaps find liberation in the process.

H2: Understanding Being-in-itself and Being-for-itself

Sartre's central thesis hinges on the distinction between two fundamental modes of being: being-in-itself (*en-soi*) and being-for-itself (*pour-soi*). Being-in-itself refers to objects in the world—rocks, trees, inanimate things. These exist passively; they simply are. They lack consciousness and self-awareness. They are defined by their essence preceding their existence.

Being-for-itself, on the other hand, applies to human consciousness. We are radically different; our existence precedes our essence. We are born into the world, and it's through our choices and actions that we define who we are. We are condemned to be free, constantly creating our own essence through our engagements with the world. This freedom is a source of both exhilaration and terrifying responsibility.

H2: The Anguish of Freedom: Facing the Absurd

This radical freedom, however, is not without its burdens. Sartre describes the feeling of anguish as the inevitable consequence of our complete responsibility. We are faced with infinite possibilities, and each choice we make shapes our future, impacts others, and contributes to the creation of our self. The weight of this responsibility can be paralyzing, leading to feelings of anxiety and dread. There's no pre-ordained path, no divine plan to guide us. We are utterly alone in our choices, facing the absurd nature of existence.

H3: Bad Faith and the Denial of Freedom

To escape this anguish, some individuals resort to bad faith. This is a form of self-deception where we deny our freedom and responsibility, pretending to be determined by external factors or societal expectations. We might adopt a pre-defined role or identity, avoiding the difficult work of self-creation. Bad faith, however, is ultimately a form of inauthenticity, a failure to embrace the full potential of our being-for-itself.

H2: The Look and the Other

Sartre also explores the concept of the "look" (le regard) and the significance of the "Other" in shaping our self-consciousness. The Other represents anyone outside ourselves, and their gaze can significantly impact our self-perception. We become aware of ourselves through the eyes of others, often leading to self-consciousness and a desire to be seen in a certain way. This interaction with the Other further complicates our journey of self-creation.

H2: Freedom and Responsibility: Embracing the Absurd

While the implications of "being and nothingness" can be daunting, Sartre ultimately offers a message of hope. Although we are condemned to be free and must grapple with the absurd, this freedom is precisely what makes human existence meaningful. It's through our choices, our actions, and our authentic engagement with the world that we create our own values and define our unique selves. This requires courage, self-awareness, and a willingness to accept the responsibility that comes with our freedom.

H2: The Lasting Influence of "Being and Nothingness"

Sartre's work has had a profound and lasting impact on philosophy, literature, and popular culture. Its exploration of existentialism continues to resonate with readers today, offering a framework for understanding the human condition in a world often characterized by uncertainty and meaninglessness. Its concepts of freedom, responsibility, and authenticity remain crucial themes in contemporary thought.

Conclusion:

"Being and nothingness" is not a comfortable read, but it's an essential one. It forces us to confront the uncomfortable truths about our existence, our freedom, and our responsibility. It compels us to take ownership of our lives and to create meaning in a world devoid of inherent meaning. Ultimately, it's a call to authenticity, a challenge to live fully and embrace the freedom that defines our being-for-itself.

FAQs:

1. What is the difference between existentialism and nihilism? Existentialism emphasizes the freedom and responsibility of human existence, while nihilism asserts the meaninglessness of existence. While both grapple with the absence of inherent meaning, existentialism finds meaning in the act of creating it, whereas nihilism rejects the possibility of meaning altogether.
2. How does Sartre's concept of "bad faith" relate to modern society? Sartre's concept of bad faith is highly relevant to modern society, where societal pressures and expectations can lead individuals to conform to pre-defined roles rather than embracing their own unique potential.

3. Is Sartre's philosophy pessimistic or optimistic? While Sartre's philosophy acknowledges the anxieties and burdens of freedom, it's ultimately optimistic in its emphasis on the power of human agency and the potential for creating meaning.

4. How does "Being and Nothingness" relate to the concept of self-creation? The core of Sartre's philosophy lies in the idea of self-creation. We are not born with a predetermined essence; rather, we create our own essence through our choices and actions.

5. What are some practical applications of Sartre's ideas in everyday life? Sartre's ideas encourage self-awareness, responsibility for one's choices, and the pursuit of authenticity. They can inform decision-making, relationships, and the overall approach to life.

being and nothingness: A Commentary on Jean-Paul Sartre's Being and Nothingness Joseph S. Catalano, 1985-09-15 [A Commentary on Jean-Paul Sartre's Being and Nothingness] represents, I believe, a very important beginning of a deservedly serious effort to make the whole of Being and Nothingness more readily understandable and readable. . . . In his systematic interpretations of Sartre's book, [Catalano] demonstrates a determination to confront many of the most demanding issues and concepts of Being and Nothingness. He does not shrink—as do so many interpreters of Sartre—from such issues as the varied meanings of 'being,' the meaning of 'internal negation' and 'absolute event,' the idiosyncratic senses of transcendence, the meaning of the 'upsurge' in its different contexts, what it means to say that we 'exist our body,' the connotation of such concepts as quality, quantity, potentiality, and instrumentality (in respect to Sartre's world of 'things'), or the origin of negation. . . . Catalano offers what is doubtless one of the most probing, original, and illuminating interpretations of Sartre's crucial concept of nothingness to appear in the Sartrean literature.—Ronald E. Santoni, *International Philosophical Quarterly*

being and nothingness: Sartre's 'Being and Nothingness' Sebastian Gardner, 2009-01-01 This text presents a concise and accessible introduction Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist book 'Being and Nothingness'.

being and nothingness: Being and Nothingness Jean-Paul Sartre, 1992 Sartre explains the theory of existential psychoanalysis in this treatise on human reality.

being and nothingness: *Being and Nothingness* Jean-Paul Sartre, 1972

being and nothingness: *Being and Nothingness* Jean-Paul Sartre, 2021-09-07 First published in French in 1943 Jean-Paul Sartre's *L'Être et le Néant* is one of the greatest philosophical works of the twentieth century. In it, Sartre offers nothing less than a brilliant and radical account of the human condition. The English philosopher and novelist Iris Murdoch wrote to a friend of the excitement - I remember nothing like it since the days of discovering Keats and Shelley and Coleridge. What gives our lives significance, Sartre argues in *Being and Nothingness*, is not pre-established for us by God or nature but is something for which we ourselves are responsible. Combining this with the unsettling view that human existence is characterized by radical freedom and the inescapability of choice, Sartre introduces us to a cast of ideas and characters that are part of philosophical legend: anguish; the 'bad faith' of the memorable waiter in the café; sexual desire; and the 'look' of the other, brought to life by Sartre's famous description of someone looking through a keyhole. Above all, by arguing that we alone create our values and that human relationships are characterized by hopeless conflict, Sartre paints a stark and controversial picture of our moral universe and one that resonates strongly today. This new translation includes a helpful Translator's Introduction, notes on the translation, a comprehensive index and a foreword by Richard Moran.--Book jacket.

being and nothingness: Being and Nothingness Jean-Paul Sartre, 1969 This monumental book, regarded by many as Sartre's greatest achievement, is one of the most influential philosophical works of the 20th century. In it Sartre set out his fundamental views on philosophy and laid the

foundations of existentialism.

being and nothingness: *Simone de Beauvoir and the Politics of Ambiguity* Sonia Kruks, 2012-12-06 A study of Simone de Beauvoir's (1908-1986) political thinking. The author locates de Beauvoir in her own intellectual and political context and demonstrates her continuing significance.

being and nothingness: Being and Time Martin Heidegger, 2022-11-18 Being and Time changed the course of philosophy. -Richard Rorty, New York Times Book Review Heidegger's masterwork. -The Economist What is the meaning of being? This is the central question of Martin Heidegger's profoundly important work, in which the great philosopher seeks to explain the basic problems of existence. This first paperback edition of John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson's definitive translation also features a foreword by Heidegger scholar Taylor Carman. A central influence on later philosophy, literature, art, and criticism-as well as existentialism and much of postmodern thought-Being and Time forever changed the intellectual map of the modern world. As Richard Rorty wrote in the New York Times Book Review, You cannot read most of the important thinkers of recent times without taking Heidegger's thought into account.

being and nothingness: Sartre on Sin Kate Kirkpatrick, 2017-10-27 Sartre on Sin: Between Being and Nothingness argues that Jean-Paul Sartre's early, anti-humanist philosophy is indebted to the Christian doctrine of original sin. On the standard reading, Sartre's most fundamental and attractive idea is freedom: he wished to demonstrate the existence of human freedom, and did so by connecting consciousness with nothingness. Focusing on Being and Nothingness, Kate Kirkpatrick demonstrates that Sartre's concept of nothingness (le néant) has a Christian genealogy which has been overlooked in philosophical and theological discussions of his work. Previous scholars have noted the resemblance between Sartre's and Augustine's ontologies: to name but one shared theme, both thinkers describe the human as the being through which nothingness enters the world. However, there has been no previous in-depth examination of this 'resemblance'. Using historical, exegetical, and conceptual methods, Kirkpatrick demonstrates that Sartre's intellectual formation prior to his discovery of phenomenology included theological elements-especially concerning the compatibility of freedom with sin and grace. After outlining the French Augustinianisms by which Sartre's account of the human as 'between being and nothingness' was informed, Kirkpatrick offers a close reading of Being and Nothingness which shows that the psychological, epistemological, and ethical consequences of Sartre's le néant closely resemble the consequences of its theological predecessor; and that his account of freedom can be read as an anti-theodicy. Sartre on Sin illustrates that Sartre's insights are valuable resources for contemporary hamartiology.

being and nothingness: Jean-Paul Sartre Steven Churchill, Dr. Jack Reynolds, 2014-09-11 Most readers of Sartre focus only on the works written at the peak of his influence as a public intellectual in the 1940s, notably Being and Nothingness. Jean-Paul Sartre: Key Concepts aims to reassess Sartre and to introduce readers to the full breadth of his philosophy. Bringing together leading international scholars, the book examines concepts from across Sartre's career, from his initial views on the inner life of conscious experience, to his later conceptions of hope as the binding agent for a common humanity. The book will be invaluable to readers looking for a comprehensive assessment of Sartre's thinking - from his early influences to the development of his key concepts, to his legacy.

being and nothingness: Zhuangzi and the Becoming of Nothingness David Chai, 2019-01-01 Explores the cosmological and metaphysical thought in the Zhuangzi from the perspective of nothingness. Zhuangzi and the Becoming of Nothingness offers a radical rereading of the Daoist classic Zhuangzi by bringing to light the role of nothingness in grounding the cosmological and metaphysical aspects of its thought. Through a careful analysis of the text and its appended commentaries, David Chai reveals not only how nothingness physically enriches the myriad things of the world, but also why the Zhuangzi prefers nothingness over being as a means to expound the authentic way of Dao. Chai weaves together Dao, nothingness, and being in order to reassess the nature and significance of Daoist philosophy, both within its own historical milieu and for modern readers interested in applying the principles of Daoism to their own lived experiences. Chai

concludes that nothingness is neither a nihilistic force nor an existential threat; instead, it is a vital component of Dao's creative power and the life-praxis of the sage. Chai provides an elaborate philosophical/ontological interpretation of the ontology/cosmology found in the Zhuangzi and the implications for existential practice. It's a close, careful, but in many respects quite original reading of the classic that contributes significantly to the field of philosophical Daoist studies. Geir Sigurðsson, author of *Confucian Propriety and Ritual Learning: A Philosophical Interpretation*

being and nothingness: Sartre on the Body K. Morris, 2009-12-09 Sartre scholars and others engage with Jean-Paul Sartre's descriptions of the human body, bringing him into dialogue with feminists, sociologists, psychologists and historians and asking: What is pain? Do men and women experience their bodies differently? How do society and culture shape our bodies? Can we re-shape them?

being and nothingness: The Book of Not Tsitsi Dangarembga, 2021-05-18 The powerful sequel to *Nervous Conditions*, by the Booker-shortlisted author of *This Mournable Body* *The Book of Not* continues the saga of Tambudzai, picking up where *Nervous Conditions* left off. As Tambu begins secondary school at the Young Ladies' College of the Sacred Heart, she is still reeling from the personal losses that have been war has inflicted upon her family—her uncle and sister were injured in a mine explosion. Soon she'll come face to face with discriminatory practices at her mostly-white school. And when she graduates and begins a job at an advertising agency, she realizes that the political and historical forces that threaten to destroy the fabric of her community are outside the walls of the school as well. Tsitsi Dangarembga, honored with the 2021 PEN Award for Freedom of Expression, digs deep into the damage colonialism and its education system does to Tambu's sense of self amid the struggle for Zimbabwe's independence, resulting in a brilliant and incisive second novel.

being and nothingness: Reading Sartre Joseph S. Catalano, 2010-05-31 Joseph Catalano offers an in-depth exploration of Jean-Paul Sartre's four major philosophical writings.

being and nothingness: At the Existentialist Café Sarah Bakewell, 2016-03-01 Great philosophy meets powerful biography in this entertaining and immensely readable portrait of mid-20th century Paris and the fascinating characters of Sartre, de Beauvoir, Camus, and their circle, who loved and hated, drank and debated with each other—and forever changed the way we think about thinking. *At the Existentialist Café* is a thrilling look at the famous group of post-war thinkers who became known as the Existentialists: Sartre, de Beauvoir, Camus, Heidegger, and their circle. Starting with Paris after the devastation of the Second World War, Sarah Bakewell (winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for her previous book) takes us inside the passionate debates and equally passionate lives of these brilliant, if flawed, characters. Here is a wonderful, vibrant look at the social, artistic and political currents that shaped the existentialist movement—a mode of thinking and being that, as Bakewell vividly shows, deeply affects us today. Never has the story of this influential group, and especially that of the legendary relationship between Sartre and de Beauvoir, been told with such verve and sweep, weaving personal life with social upheaval and the universal quest for understanding.

being and nothingness: The Labyrinth Ben Argon, 2020-04-14 "Designed for the studious and dabblers alike" this unique graphic novel offers "an accessible primer on one of the 20th century's weightiest thinkers" (*Publishers Weekly*). Life can often feel like a rat race. To make sense of it all, generations of truth seekers have turned to the works of philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. Now a fellow seeker shares a charming and accessible introduction to Sartre's profound and complex ideas—told in cartoons. Ben Argon's graphic novel about a pair of rats trapped in the labyrinth of existence humorously conveys the key ideas of Sartre's existential philosophy. In addition, two Sartre scholars have contributed an introduction and afterword providing context and deeper insight.

being and nothingness: The Vindication of Nothingness Marco Simionato, 2021-11-17 The philosophical question of nothingness has often been controversial. The main core of the question is the use of 'nothing' or 'nothingness' as a noun phrase rather than a quantifier phrase. This work

deals with the question of nothingness and metaphysical nihilism in analytic philosophy. After evaluating an account of nothingness based on the notion of an empty possible world, the present work proposes two original arguments for metaphysical nihilism. With a preface by Graham Priest. "Simionato's book delivers a welcome deepening of our understanding of nothing." Graham Priest

being and nothingness: The Credo of Being and Nothingness Wole Soyinka, 1991 From the first African Nobel Laureate, this is the first in a series of Olufosoye Annual Lectures on Religions, delivered at the University of Ibadan in 1991. Soyinka, in his characteristically stimulating way, discusses the religions of Nigeria in their national context, and other religions from around the world. The author says At one conceptual level or the other...deeply embedded as an article of faith, is a relegation of this material world to a mere staging-post...then universal negation...Existence, as we know it, comes to the end that was pre-ordained from the beginning of time. Indeed, time itself comes to an end.

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being and nothingness: One Graham Priest, 2014-02 Explores philosophical questions concerning the one and the many, covering a wide range of issues in metaphysics and deploying techniques of paraconsistent logic while bringing together traditions of Western and Asian thought.

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being and nothingness: Truth and Existence Jean-Paul Sartre, Arlette Elkaïm-Sartre, 1995-06 Published posthumously, the text presents Sartre's ontology of truth in terms of freedom, action, and bad faith

being and nothingness: Why Does the World Exist?: An Existential Detective Story Jim Holt, 2012-07-16 The Washington Post Notable Non-Fiction of 2013 "I can imagine few more enjoyable ways of thinking than to read this book."—Sarah Bakewell, New York Times Book Review, front-page review Tackling the "darkest question in all of philosophy" with "raffish erudition" (Dwight Garner, New York Times), author Jim Holt explores the greatest metaphysical mystery of all: why is there something rather than nothing? This runaway bestseller, which has captured the imagination of critics and the public alike, traces our latest efforts to grasp the origins of the universe. Holt adopts the role of cosmological detective, traveling the globe to interview a host of celebrated scientists, philosophers, and writers, "testing the contentions of one against the theories of the other" (Jeremy Bernstein, Wall Street Journal). As he interrogates his list of ontological culprits, the brilliant yet slyly humorous Holt contends that we might have been too narrow in

limiting our suspects to God versus the Big Bang. This “deft and consuming” (David Ulin, Los Angeles Times) narrative humanizes the profound questions of meaning and existence it confronts.

being and nothingness: Being and Nothingness Jean-Paul Sartre, 1974

being and nothingness: Nothing Will Be Different Tara McGowan-Ross, 2021-10-26 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction 2022 — Shortlisted A neurotic party girl's coming-of-age memoir about learning to live before getting ready to die. Tara has it pretty good: a nice job, a writing career, a forgiving boyfriend. She should be happy. Yet Tara can't stay sober. She's terrible at monogamy. Even her psychiatrist grows sick of her and stops returning her calls. She spends most of her time putting out social fires, barely pulling things off, and feeling sick and tired. Then, in the autumn following her twenty-seventh birthday, an abnormal lump discovered in her left breast serves as the catalyst for a journey of rigorous self-questioning. Waiting on a diagnosis, she begins an intellectual assessment of her life, desperate to justify a short existence full of dumb choices. Armed with her philosophy degree and angry determination, she attacks each issue in her life as the days creep by and winds up writing a searingly honest memoir about learning to live before getting ready to die. A RARE MACHINES BOOK

being and nothingness: Jean-Paul Sartre Christine Daigle, 2009-10-16 A critical figure in twentieth-century literature and philosophy, Jean-Paul Sartre changed the course of critical thought, and claimed a new, important role for the intellectual. Christine Daigle sets Sartre's thought in context, and considers a number of key ideas in detail, charting their impact and continuing influence, including: Sartre's theories of consciousness, being and freedom as outlined in *Being and Nothingness* and other texts the ethics of authenticity and absolute responsibility concrete relations, sexual relationships and gender difference, focusing on the significance of the alienating look of the Other the social and political role of the author the legacy of Sartre's theories and their relationship to structuralism and philosophy of mind. Introducing both literary and philosophical texts by Sartre, this volume makes Sartre's ideas newly accessible to students of literary and cultural studies as well as to students of continental philosophy and French.

being and nothingness: Nihilism and Philosophy Gideon Baker, 2018-04-19 The question of nihilism is always a question of truth. It is a crisis of truth that causes the experience of the nothingness of existence. What elevated truth to this existential position? The answer is: philosophy. The philosophical will to truth opens the door to nihilism, since it both makes identifying truth the utmost aim and yet continually calls it into question. Baker develops the central insight that the crises of truth and of existence, or 'loss of world', that occur within nihilistic thought are inseparable, in a wide-ranging study from antiquity to the present, from ancient Cynics, St Paul, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Foucault, Agamben, and Badiou. Baker contends that since nihilism is always a question of the relation to the world occasioned by the philosophical will to truth, an answer to nihilism must be able to propose a new understanding of truth.

being and nothingness: The Mystical Sources of Existentialist Thought George Pattison, Kate Kirkpatrick, 2018-11-21 At the time when existentialism was a dominant intellectual and cultural force, a number of commentators observed that some of the language of existential philosophy, not least its interpretation of human existence in terms of nothingness, evoked the language of so-called mystical writers. This book takes on this observation and explores the evidence for the influence of mysticism on the philosophy of existentialism. It begins by delving into definitions of mysticism and existentialism, and then traces the elements of mysticism present in German and French thought during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The book goes on to make original contributions to the study of figures including Kierkegaard, Buber, Heidegger, Beauvoir, Sartre, Marcel, Camus, Weil, Bataille, Berdyaev, and Tillich, linking their existentialist philosophy back to some of the key concerns of the mystical tradition. Providing a unique insight into how these two areas have overlapped and interacted, this study is vital reading for any academic with an interest in twentieth-century philosophy, theology and religious studies.

being and nothingness: Understanding Existentialism Dr. Jack Reynolds, 2014-12-18 Understanding Existentialism provides an accessible introduction to existentialism by examining the

major themes in the work of Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and de Beauvoir. Paying particular attention to the key texts, *Being and Time*, *Being and Nothingness*, *Phenomenology of Perception*, *The Ethics of Ambiguity* and *The Second Sex*, the book explores the shared concerns and the disagreements between these major thinkers. The fundamental existential themes examined include: freedom; death, finitude and mortality; phenomenological experiences and 'moods', such as anguish, angst, nausea, boredom, and fear; an emphasis upon authenticity and responsibility as well as the denigration of their opposites (inauthenticity and Bad Faith); a pessimism concerning the tendency of individuals to become lost in the crowd and even a pessimism about human relations more generally; and a rejection of any external determination of morality or value. Finally, the book assesses the influence of these philosophers on poststructuralism, arguing that existentialism remains an extraordinarily productive school of thought.

being and nothingness: The Existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre Jonathan Webber, 2009-01-13 Webber argues for a new interpretation of Sartrean existentialism. On this reading, Sartre is arguing that each person's character consists in the projects they choose to pursue and that we are all already aware of this but prefer not to face it. Careful consideration of his existentialist writings shows this to be the unifying theme of his theories of consciousness, freedom, the self, bad faith, personal relationships, existential psychoanalysis, and the possibility of authenticity. Developing this account affords many insights into various aspects of his philosophy, not least concerning the origins, structure, and effects of bad faith and the resulting ethic of authenticity. This discussion makes clear the contributions that Sartre's work can make to current debates over the objectivity of ethics and the psychology of agency, character, and selfhood. Written in an accessible style and illustrated with reference to Sartre's fiction, this book should appeal to general readers and students as well as to specialists.

being and nothingness: The Transcendence of the Ego Jean-Paul Sartre, 2004-06-15 First published in France in 1936 as a journal article, *The Transcendence of the Ego* was one of Jean-Paul Sartre's earliest philosophical publications. When it appeared, Sartre was still largely unknown, working as a school teacher in provincial France and struggling to find a publisher for his most famous fictional work, *Nausea*. *The Transcendence of the Ego* is the outcome of Sartre's intense engagement with the philosophy of Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology. Here, as in many subsequent writings, Sartre embraces Husserl's vision of phenomenology as the proper method for philosophy. But he argues that Husserl's conception of the self as an inner entity, 'behind' conscious experience is mistaken and phenomenologically unfounded. *The Transcendence of the Ego* offers a brilliant diagnosis of where Husserl went wrong, and a radical alternative account of the self as a product of consciousness, situated in the world. This essay introduces many of the themes central to Sartre's major work, *Being and Nothingness*: the nature of consciousness, the problem of self-knowledge, other minds, anguish. It demonstrates their presence and importance in Sartre's thinking from the very outset of his career. This fresh translation makes this classic work available again to students of Sartre, phenomenology, existentialism, and twentieth century philosophy. It includes a thorough and illuminating introduction by Sarah Richmond, placing Sartre's essay in its philosophical and historical context.

being and nothingness: How to Be an Existentialist Gary Cox, 2010-06-01 *How to Be an Existentialist* is a witty and entertaining book about the philosophy of existentialism. It is also a genuine self-help book offering clear advice on how to live according to the principles of existentialism formulated by Nietzsche, Sartre, Camus, and the other great existentialist philosophers. An attack on contemporary excuse culture, the book urges us to face the hard existential truths of the human condition. By revealing that we are all inescapably free and responsible - 'condemned to be free,' as Sartre says - the book aims to empower the reader with a sharp sense that we are each the master of our own destiny. Cox makes fun of the reputation existentialism has for being gloomy and pessimistic, exposing it for what it really is - an honest, uplifting, and potentially life changing philosophy!

being and nothingness: *An Anthropology of Nothing in Particular* Martin Demant Frederiksen,

2018-08-31 There have been claims that meaninglessness has become epidemic in the contemporary world. One perceived consequence of this is that people increasingly turn against both society and the political establishment with little concern for the content (or lack of content) that might follow. Most often, encounters with meaninglessness and nothingness are seen as troubling. Meaning is generally seen as being a cornerstone of the human condition, as that which we strive towards. This was famously explored by Viktor Frankl in *Man's Search for Meaning* in which he showed how even in the direst of situations individuals will often seek to find a purpose in life. But what, then, is at stake when groups of people negate this position? What exactly goes on inside this apparent turn towards nothing, in the engagement with meaninglessness? And what happens if we take the meaningless seriously as an empirical fact?

being and nothingness: Being and Nothingness Jean-Paul Sartre, 1972

being and nothingness: The Transcendence of the Ego Jean-Paul Sartre, 1957 The Transcendence of the Ego may be regarded as a turning-point in the philosophical development of Jean-Paul Sartre. Prior to the writing of this essay, published in France in 1937, Sartre had been intimately acquainted with the phenomenological movement which originated in Germany with Edmund Husserl. It is a fundamental tenet of Husserl, the notion of a transcendent ego, which is here attacked by Sartre. This disagreement with Husserl has great importance for Sartre and facilitated the transition from phenomenology to the doctrine of Being and Nothingness.

being and nothingness: Being and Time Martin Heidegger, 2010-07-01 A revised translation of Heidegger's most important work.

being and nothingness: A Universe from Nothing Lawrence Maxwell Krauss, 2013 This is a provocative account of the astounding new answers to the most basic philosophical question: Where did the universe come from and how will it end?

being and nothingness: *Heidegger and the Contradiction of Being* Filippo Casati, 2021-11-30 This book offers a clear, analytic, and innovative interpretation of Heidegger's late work. This period of Heidegger's philosophy remains largely unexplored by analytic philosophers, who consider it filled with inconsistencies and paradoxical ideas, particularly concerning the notions of Being and nothingness. This book takes seriously the claim that the late Heidegger endorses dialetheism – namely the position according to which some contradictions are true – and shows that the idea that Being is both an entity and not an entity is neither incoherent nor logically trivial. The author achieves this by presenting and defending the idea that reality has an inconsistent structure. In doing so, he takes one of the most discussed topics in current analytic metaphysics, grounding theory, into a completely unexplored area. Additionally, in order to make sense of Heidegger's concept of nothingness, the author introduces an original axiomatic mereological system that, having a paraconsistent logic as a base logic, can tolerate inconsistencies without falling into logical triviality. This is the first book to set forth a complete and detailed discussion of the late Heidegger in the framework of analytic metaphysics. It will be of interest to Heidegger scholars and analytic philosophers working on theories of grounding, mereology, dialetheism, and paraconsistent logic.

being and nothingness: Say Nothing Patrick Radden Keefe, 2020-02-25 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • SOON TO BE AN FX LIMITED SERIES STREAMING ON HULU • NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD WINNER • From the author of *Empire of Pain*—a stunning, intricate narrative about a notorious killing in Northern Ireland and its devastating repercussions. One of The New York Times's 20 Best Books of the 21st Century Masked intruders dragged Jean McConville, a 38-year-old widow and mother of 10, from her Belfast home in 1972. In this meticulously reported book—as finely paced as a novel—Keefe uses McConville's murder as a prism to tell the history of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Interviewing people on both sides of the conflict, he transforms the tragic damage and waste of the era into a searing, utterly gripping saga. —New York Times Book Review Reads like a novel ... Keefe is ... a master of narrative nonfiction. . .An incredible story.—Rolling Stone A Best Book of the Year: The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, TIME, NPR, and more! Jean McConville's abduction was one of the most notorious episodes of the vicious conflict known as The Troubles. Everyone in the neighborhood knew the

I.R.A. was responsible. But in a climate of fear and paranoia, no one would speak of it. In 2003, five years after an accord brought an uneasy peace to Northern Ireland, a set of human bones was discovered on a beach. McConville's children knew it was their mother when they were told a blue safety pin was attached to the dress--with so many kids, she had always kept it handy for diapers or ripped clothes. Patrick Radden Keefe's mesmerizing book on the bitter conflict in Northern Ireland and its aftermath uses the McConville case as a starting point for the tale of a society wracked by a violent guerrilla war, a war whose consequences have never been reckoned with. The brutal violence seared not only people like the McConville children, but also I.R.A. members embittered by a peace that fell far short of the goal of a united Ireland, and left them wondering whether the killings they committed were not justified acts of war, but simple murders. From radical and impetuous I.R.A. terrorists such as Dolours Price, who, when she was barely out of her teens, was already planting bombs in London and targeting informers for execution, to the ferocious I.R.A. mastermind known as The Dark, to the spy games and dirty schemes of the British Army, to Gerry Adams, who negotiated the peace but betrayed his hardcore comrades by denying his I.R.A. past--Say Nothing conjures a world of passion, betrayal, vengeance, and anguish.

being and nothingness: *An Introduction to Husserl's Phenomenology* Jan Patocka, 2018-05-03
Patocka's celebrated Introduction, here made available in English for the first time, is not an introduction in the ordinary sense of the term. Patocka ranges over the whole of Husserl's output, from *The Philosophy of Arithmetic* to *The Crisis of the European Sciences*, and traces the evolution of all the central issues of Husserlian phenomenology--intentionality, categorial intuition, temporality, the subject-body; the concrete a priori, and transcendental subjectivity. But rather than attempting to give a tour of Husserl's workshop, Patocka is himself hard at work on Husserl's problems.

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