

Original Paper

Distinctions and Similarities between Nothingness and the Not-being

Héctor Sevilla Godínez¹

¹ University of Guadalajara, México

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Abstract

Among the concepts derived from Nothingness, whether to find either similarities or differences, is that of the not-being. The essential arguments will be shown to understand that Nothingness is not the not-being, and that this is simply a manifestation of it. Likewise, the distinction between Nothingness and Nihilism will be boarded, making it noted that the latter is only one way of appreciating Nothingness; understanding from it that the concept is not the same as that which is conceptualized.

Keywords

Nothingness, Nihilism, not-being, contingency, being

1. Introduction

If Nothingness is nothing, how is it that we can conceive it? If Nothingness is nothing, how is it that it has a word to refer to it? If Nothingness is not nothing and is, therefore, something, what would be the point of speaking of it? Mainly to take note of that in itself: that Nothingness is; and due to it being, we are; and due to us being, we conceive it, at least from the parameters in which us humans understand.

Does it make sense today to speak of Nothingness? Of course. And the main motive to speak of it is that speaking of it has ceased, as if it were not; as if it had simply been a concept overcome during the Middle Ages. But it is not so. Nothingness has been concealed, covered up, feared, hidden, or denied throughout the history of human thought; which is why now, in times in which less answers remain, Nothingness must show itself as an alternative towards our always very human desire to have, to be, to seem. Nothingness is the appropriate space for potentialities, for beginnings, for the births of new ideas, of creativity, of mental skills, of timely understanding, and correct wording.

Nothingness is metaphorically present in the zero; in space; in change and mobility; in substance modification; in silence, losses, and “no-senses”. And it is there, within the Nothingness that is still left for the contemporary man, that he must reconstruct himself to once again be, though now in a distinct

way, more profoundly and completely. The Nothingness which is left to the human is to consider Everything.

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. Nothingness has occupied roles which we have constructed so as not to allow others to see it. Nothingness is seen without seeing it. We have covered it with veils; 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 it is from Nothingness that we can have the option of re-understanding the world.

Nothingness can be approached from various fields, as it has been a persistent topic of fascination across the diverse domains of human knowledge. Since Heraclitus, philosophers have sought to understand it; since Sophocles, intellectuals have attempted to describe it. The atomists, like the Mayans with the number zero and its personification, sought to decipher it mathematically. In the early Middle Ages, Saint Augustine tried to deny it to affirm divinity, while other theologians, such as Meister Eckhart, unified it with the Deity. Astronomers have attempted to locate Nothingness beyond the world, and since the Stoics, it has been conceived as existing beyond the universe. Scientists once filled the concept of Nothingness with ether, leading to the developments of quantum physics, which now conceive it in a dialectical relationship with Being.

Hence, Nothingness has not only been in distinct disciplines of knowledge but is implied in, and related with, the most fundamental questions that man may ask himself. Issues such as life and death; the existence, or not, of values; the existence, or not, of knowledge; ideas posed about truth or lies; about the being or the not-being; about change, movement, space, matter, or emptiness; Nothingness is always present. How is it, then, that something which is always present can be excluded from our perception? How is it intended that Nothingness, that allows that which is, not be?

2. Distinction between Nothingness and the Not-being

For this first part, I have decided to make a partition on two fundamental lines. The first line is regarding the contingency of the not-being, referring to multiple commentaries and postures; both personal and pertaining to other philosophers. I will attempt to demonstrate how the fact itself of the not-being's contingency makes it impossible to be called Absolute Nothingness as such, which, in its absoluteness, implies being incontinent. Further along, I will dedicate a special section to the Aristotelian idea of the not-being and the implications that such a concept would have had since the philosopher from Stagira.

About the common confusion between the not-being and Nothingness, we can situate that in Western thought, everything began when Parmenides associates Nothingness only to the not-being, thus conditioning the greater part of the speculations that followed, including Plato and Aristotle himself.

However, I now commence at the idea that Nothingness is prior to the Being, that which makes it possible.

In this sense, I understand “not-being” as the ideal term to represent that which stands in opposition to the being of a being. In a simple sense, not-being would constitute the negation of Being as it is. Thus, the not-being of a particular mode differs from substantial not-being. In other words, not-being can be understood in relation to that which stands as a counterpart to a being. This counterpart refers to changes in category, place, or quantity, existing within an inevitable dialectic with the being that undergoes modification. The possible negation of Being is grounded in the constant interplay between acts and potentiality, where the act is, and, upon transitioning into potentiality (enabled by the possibility introduced by Nothingness), the previous act becomes a not-being, as it no longer exists.

In a distinct manner does Nothingness act, for Nothingness is not the denial of the Being but previous to it—we said it had to do with the potentiality of being. There also exists, then, dialectic between Nothingness and the not-being without this supposing that they are, due to it, the same. This is to say that when something is, it always is in a particular manner; and many manners in which it is not, correspond to this particular manner; and these many manners, are found in Nothingness but aren't Nothingness. For example, if we speak of an individual who lives, let's call her Rocío; we would have to say about Rocío's life, that it has a not-being. In other words, such Rocío as a “dead Rocío” is in the manner of a not-being which is not yet, but that could come to be since, precisely, Rocío is alive. If Rocío had not ever been alive, then the possibility of the dead Rocío doesn't exist either in the manner of the not-being. It wouldn't be a not-being, it would be Nothingness; for it would not yet have been, and since it would have not yet been, it could not be in a manner of not-being subsequent to it. Once Rocío exists, there is a being; once this exists, a not-being corresponds to it, which would be when it ceases to live. This, her not-being, is always contingent, for it ineludibly requires the Being of the being which will be denied. Now, when the not-being is of something – or someone – we have said that it is contingent though it certainly is not yet, but it requires what is already to be in reference to it. Where, then, is the not-being located – within the metaphysical plane of which I speak – in Nothingness or in the Being? From my perspective, it is found in the nothing; but in the nothing which is in reference to the Being, therefore not in the Nothingness which is prior to every Being and, furthermore, incontinent. The not-being is not Nothingness but is part of nothing; a relative nothing to what is.

Now, I have said that every being that is has also a particular manner of being. This particular manner has a contrary manner, inversely to the being, to the extent that the possibility of change exists. The not-being is the counterpart of the being which is in act, its denial, its opposite. But such opposite is not yet, so, Nothingness enables the not-being to the extent that the counterpart of the being is not yet. At the same time, the Being enables the not-being to the extent that its own self supposes the potential existence of a counterpart that is not yet and that, due to the relationship it keeps with the being that is, it turns into a specific not-being. In part, this aspect distinguishes the not-being of Nothingness; this is to say, that the not-being is always in reference to that which is, and that it is something specific. Its

referential manner supposes the denial of such being, but since it cannot be constituted as the denial of nothing, then the not-being is always contingent.

Stated differently, the not-being is for Nothingness what the being is for the Being. There is no being without Being; there is no not-being without Nothingness. The not-being, I have said, is nothing; being so, there is no nothing without Nothingness. Now, just as there is no being without Being, there is neither any Being without being, unless it be precisely Nothingness. Nothingness is, in this sense, a way of being without entity. In difference to the Being which is in a forced reference to a being (including the immaterial beings), Nothingness is not in a forced reference to a not-being, nor to the Being, and even less to beings. Due to the aforesaid, it is superior to the three, additionally to being preceding and consequent.

In a different manner, if we allude to the possibility of the not-being of the not-being, in this sense we would be simply speaking of the Being. It can also be spoken of the being that contains the Being which, in this case, is the reference with the being in as much as it is; or, the implication of Nothingness in as much as an identity of the Being without being. But we cannot speak of the Nothingness of Nothingness, for this would be Nothingness in itself as such.

I have already said that partial nothing is what enables the advent of the not-being's updating. In this sense, the only possibility that the not-being that is in potentiality of the being in act becomes, in turn, a being in act, is precisely the nothing of the being which will be in act; for only like this would the birth of the consequent being in act be understood. This is not a proof of the Being's surging from Nothingness. It is the specific proof of the interaction of the Being and the not-being due to Nothingness, for it does not come out of a new being in act of Nothingness, but instead the updating denial of the being in act prior to that which it substitutes. The new being is the updating of the not-being in potentiality – prior – and, at the same time, is the denial of the being in preceding act. That which originates that such event occurs does not have to do with the intentionality of Nothingness, but that this permitted the process itself by the fact of being Nothingness.

At this point I could be asked: how is it that matter exists, or where has this come from, if in the beginning it was Nothingness? The issue that I foresee is even more profound: how is it that the Being is, if there was only Nothingness prior to the Being? So, two possible options remain: either Nothingness has always coexisted with the Being, or Nothingness is prior to the Being. I would not assume the Being to be preceding Nothingness for in this case it would be extremely difficult to respond to: how is it that from Being, Nothingness is detached? And, likewise, to respond to: how is it that from Nothingness, the Being is detached? My position, in any case, is the first one; this is to say, that Nothingness and the Being interrelate to one another in an interactive manner these days; but that between both, the contingency is given from the Being towards Nothingness, not in the inverse direction. This would suppose that – though the Being and Nothingness coexist today – in any way, in the beginning, Nothingness preceded what it is. Even so, it does not imply – as I asked above – that from it the Being is detached. On the other hand, I understand that the mistake which is usually

committed in this type of issues is to assume that there has been, effectively, a beginning. This is to say, that there exists an initial origin to everything. In this case, I believe we are at a favorable moment to consider that there has been no such beginning, and that the notion of a beginning is merely part of our fiction, a construct to organize time. If, by chance, there were a beginning, we could not assume it, for, had it occurred, Nothingness would have enabled it without the presence of any form of consciousness – corporeal or otherwise – to bear witness to such an event. It could be affirmed that, at least in the moment in which there was some consciousness capable of registering such circumstance, that there, there was already a Being.

All the changes we have seen and have learnt about evolution, the Big-Bang or any theory which supposes changes, is centered on the changes of the Being in regard to its manner of being, or even to its passing into the not-being. But such changes are not changes of Nothingness; Nothingness doesn't change. If Nothingness is, then it always has been, for it would not be able to change from not-being to being, since if it changes, it is no longer Nothingness. Nothingness is always (not being) and, hence, precedes the Being, which contains the possibility of changes. Therefore, if we are to define what precedes what, then surely, we will respond that what does not change precedes those which changes. For what changes could not have been to later be and, once it is, modify itself. In a different manner, what is not (being) – Nothingness – cannot change and, thus, it cannot have something which precedes it; since if it did, it would at least suppose the change from not having been to being.

It could be said to me: and what if Nothingness – since it does not change – has always been without being? And my response is that, effectively, it is so; and that, consequently, it precedes everything. The consequence of it is that there is a start to the Being in regard to showing itself, but not a start of the Being in regard to itself. If there were a start of the Being in regard to itself, then a previous containing Nothingness corresponds to that Being that starts, in any moment that this may be. There is no way the Being may precede Nothingness, with a start or without it.

We can then summarize it in the following manner: “Nothingness cannot be confused with the Not-being [...] Nothingness is the naught, the not born [...] and, therefore, previous to the Being, not its denial” (Note 1). In such a manner that Nothingness is the absolute possibility of what is to come, including in such coming, the Being itself.

Even so, in the understanding of the association of Nothingness with the not-being, we would have to refer to two manners of Nothingness, or two types of Nothingness. One, Nothingness, which I call Absolute Nothingness, that is prior to the being such as it is; and the other, nothing, which is the possibility of being, distinct to the Being that already is and which, in act, is a not-being. I have called this type of nothing the relative nothing, specific or partial.

About the previous issue, it is necessary to concretely exemplify it by referring to a change in the quality category, beginning at the human being. If we say that Felipe (to mention any name) is an ignorant man, this is because ignorance is in act within him, which is why he is an ignorant man in act. But this supposes a possible denial (that is not yet, which is why it remains in nothing) which, at the

same time, would be the specific counterpart of such affirmation; in other words, that Felipe is a wise man. But at this time, ignorant Felipe's not-being is the wise Felipe which is in potentiality. Aristotle would affirm for us that the being in potentiality could be called the not-being when he affirms that: "everything comes from the being; but, without a doubt, the being in potentiality; in other words, from the not-being in act" (Note 2). So the not-being in act is the wise Felipe who, necessarily, is specifically in relation to ignorant Felipe who is the being in act and, therefore, the not-being in potentiality in relation to the possible (and new) being in act. Two of these issues belong to the realm of nothing: the wise Felipe as an act and the ignorant Felipe in potentiality. Both are issues that are not yet born; more than their possibility is not yet possible; they are still a not yet not-being. Which is why, naturally, Nothingness is prior to the Being and to the corresponding not-being to the being in question. Hence, even prior to Felipe being (independently of him being ignorant or wise), Nothingness is.

The forthcoming that Nothingness permits, and which supposed the advent to the being of Felipe who is a being with qualities, supposes the existence of the not-being of each one of his qualities, but also the not-being of Felipe himself. This leads us to recognize that the not-being is implied in dialectic with the being in all its categories; in other words, the substance, quality, quantity, and physical location. In such a way that there are so many manners of Felipe's not-being as manners of being that Felipe has. Nothingness is prior to all these possibilities; and once these possibilities have been specified, the counterpart of all of these is the not-being, even with the implication of the enabling nothing of the not-being.

In reference to the not-being of Felipe's substance, we can say that there is only substantial not-being to the extent that a determined substance is. Nothingness is prior to the substance; and once the substance is, it also has a not-being. But when we refer to substantial changes – or to the advent of the updating of the substantial not-being in potentiality that now is – then, this new being in potentiality, or substance in potentiality, once again has a corresponding not-being. Due to the aforesaid, it is warned that everything that exists supposes a not-being that corresponds to it. And each substance that emerges, just like each new category of the being, when they yet do not contain a not-being, are Nothingness. This affirmation is such that it is understood in derivation, that Nothingness is the only thing which does not have a not-being. Paradoxically, Nothingness is affirmative; an Absolute Nothingness, immoveable substance without matter or change.

Being so, Absolute Nothingness refers to that which has not yet been subordinated into something which identifies it in a contingent manner; hence, that whose substance is the un-definition, not only categorical but also in itself. As such, the not-being is not Nothingness and is distinguished in that, the first exists in dialectic with the being and, the latter, Nothingness, is even prior to the Being. Nothingness is not the denial of the being for it is not in such dialectic of negativity. Hence Shakespeare's phrase about the dilemma of the being and the not-being, has never been the dilemma between the Being and Nothingness. Nothingness is superior to the Being. That's why Nothingness overcomes the Being in its characteristic of being Absolute, for there is no such thing as an Absolute

Being. There is only Absolute Nothingness. For an absolute Being, there is no change possible, so this supposes that it not be precisely a Being as such but only the Absolute Nothingness.

Nothingness does not presuppose the Being; it's only that we can't understand it without this presupposition. Neither does it have to be separated; it simply accompanies it until it is not. Once what is, is, what corresponds is the not-being, but not Nothingness which would be, in any case, to what it returns in the utter and substantial destruction of itself.

3. Aristotle and the Not-being

The philosopher from the school of Peripatetic clearly affirms that: "[one] cannot go from the not-being to the being, for it was and is an axiom that nothing can generate itself from what it is not" (Note 3). On my part, I assume that the not being allows, facilitates, the being of something which previously was not. The not-being is not the origin of movement and neither is Nothingness, but rather this is its final cause: a necessary condition for the same movement. We have also said, this time coinciding with the Stagirite, that the not-being is due to the being of which it is a reference in the manner of an antithesis. But it is clear that there is no antithesis without a thesis, or vice-versa.

It can be spoken of the not-being in three meanings: a) according to the categories in a negative form; b) in the form of a false affirmation; and c) in accordance with the new formulation – important for my proposal – from which what is not, exists according to capacity or potentially. Furthermore, what potentially exists cannot update itself into anything but rather in accordance with its ontological capacity for something determined.

The instant in which Aristotle created his theory of deprivation was decisive, for he could then logically explain Parmenides' not-being (Note 4). However, the concepts that Aristotle utilizes in such explanation, in other words those of generation and deprivation, are clearly an analogy to the not-being. In fact, even in some of the Stagirite's writings, is it observed that something can be and not-be at the same time; for, "of a house without matter or of health without matter, can it be said that they both are as much as they are not" (Note 5). It is not understood how it is that denying the not-being he assumes that there are things that are not at the same time.

For Parmenides, only a static world can be intelligible, which is why movement and change are not intelligible. Plato partly overcame Parmenides upon conceding that in the earthly or sensible world, the only things we have are opinions though not true knowledge, not knowing. For Aristotle, matter is eternal; therefore, what can be modified is the form of it, changing it, and this supposes something else that generates such change. In such a manner that, in all change, we distinguish the matter that changes, the form into which it changes, and that which produced the change. A substance is born always from a substance. This is the explanation of the concept of «matter, deprivation, form» that the Stagirite so used.

Updated matter is the first; potentiality always is as a function of it. In the same way that the premises generate a conclusion, and the conclusion depends on the premises in logical issues, in physical issues the potentialities depend on the act, not the act on the potentialities.

Heraclitus already affirmed that nature tends to the opposite and produces concordance from there. All qualitative change was explained as “transit to the opposite”; hence one has to distinguish between movement (from one place to another), qualitative change (from one manner of being to another), and generation (from one substance to another).

For Aristotle, there is a distinction between not-being and deprivation: primarily, that absolute not-being lacks deprivation, as deprivation must originate from something that exists. Based on this, one could argue in favor of the absoluteness of Nothingness, as Nothingness itself is not deprived of anything. Material and contingent entities, by contrast, are subject to deprivation—they are, in fact, deprived—and this condition enables the existence of change in the world. Change pertains to the realm of Being, occurring either from one being to another or from one state of deprivation to another, but never from Nothingness to Being. Rather, change occurs thanks to—or as a result of—Nothingness, which constitutes a third aspect to be considered in the process of change. Nothingness does not deprive, for it is deprivation itself; and deprivation, by definition, cannot be deprived.

In the Aristotelian triad of matter-deprivation-form, Nothingness is the possibility of deprivation; which is why Nothingness is in the Being, enabling it and, at the same time, enabling change without being the change itself. Nothingness is not change; change is a consequence of Nothingness, and due to the existence of matter and form. In that sense, deprivation as potentiality is eternal. Even supposed randomness or spontaneity has a causal nexus with the thing, which is obvious since the thing that changes is changing due to that which we understand as randomness, which, in this sense, is in relation to the thing. Fortunately, is in relation to nature, but there is no absolute randomness if we consider the almost infinite connections that are interconnected to everything that happens, in spite of their being incomprehensible to us.

Being so, regarding the question: why to things happen in our lives? I could respond that though the force of our will is not implied, consciously, in an act that is happening to us; in other words, that it has not been directly elected. This does not mean (in any way) that we are before a find of randomness; instead, that the causality of such an event remains concealed from our knowledge, but it is there.

Even the relationships of ideas, including the learning gestated from association, have causality for the connections between the neurons occur without the individual’s will. One can, for example the reader, strive to remember something, but the direct movement of the neuron with another is not propitiated by will but from the connection of some idea which has surged by our effort to remember based on an idea that, effectively, will take us – with luck – to remember what we desired to. In what manner was one idea connected with another? It is not randomness; neither was it under my control, for if it was, we would always be able to remember what we wanted to and experience wouldn’t dictate the contrary.

So, then, not everything that is not under the authority of a volition is randomness, though such term is commonly utilized to avoid referring to a causality that is not comprehended. This non-comprehended causality is no other thing than the relationship of the Being with Nothingness. This relationship is not always conceived, but not because of that does it cease to be existent. The reader, who upon reading this now has an idea, can prove that such an idea was not present more than to the extent that he or she is now in contact with it. So, where was that idea previously? Is that not a relationship between the Being and Nothingness?

4. Distinction between Nothingness and Nihilism

The not-being implies a vital importance in its dialectic with the Being, for in the end there is no Being without a not-being of oneself. When we speak of the not-being as a denial of the Being we inevitably imply a pejorative issue –automatically despicable– towards that which is negativity. However, anything that any person affirms can also be linked to the negative, for the being is the not-being of the not-being. In the end, there is no absolute affirmation or denial (even less in morality), rather, it is only about causality and a temporality that allows the affirmation of one of the opposites, particularly one in a specific and finite temporality.

There is no manner of affirming something about what is without the consideration of the not-being. Hence, if what is mentioned about something is always necessary unknowingness and distortion of that about which we have expressed ourselves, then from the same parameters we could recognize without any problem – in the case of expressing ourselves about our own selves – that each person is what he is not; or, even more compromising, that “I am what I am not”; or even that “I am not he who I am” which, at the same time, is very distinct to the nihilising “I, the one I am not”; since the Being is not Nothingness but, rather, this one is prior to the other. Everything that is, in the end, goes to the Nothingness from which it surged. Death is not yet but it will be. I will be Nothingness and you, reader, whoever you may be, will be it as well.

Many are the thinkers who have delved into the terrain of Nihilism. However, it is necessary to specify a clear difference between the Nihilism that some consider as “the essential cause of the evils which afflict contemporary man (Note 6)” and the conception of Nothingness that I propose here, which is, in fact, one of the possibilities of solution of such evils.

For the comprehension of the term “Nihilism”, it is necessary to locate its utterly Western origin, coupled especially with the advent of German idealism, whose main figure is without a doubt Hegel. However, before the word Nihilism, Nothingness was already; and it was also a topic of interest for philosophers, as we covered previously.

With Nihilism and without it, Nothingness is, then, a fundamental topic in the philosopher’s errands. Such as Heidegger expresses, “The hardest touchstone, but also less misleading, to try the genuine character and strength of a philosopher is if he unexpectedly and fundamentally experiments the

neighborhood of Nothing[ness] and the [B]eing of the being. He, to whom this experience hinders, is and hopelessly out of philosophy” (Note 7).

Now, for the distinction between Nihilism and Nothingness which occupies us, it is in our interest to make a brief analysis about the word Nihilism. The term nihil, that in Latin refers to “nothing”, was taken in its categorization of “Nihilism” in various authors of the Nineteenth Century. Volpi (Note 8) refers mainly to Turgueniev who utilizes the term in his novel *Padres e Hijos* [Parents and Children]. With it, he describes the attitude of one of the characters named Bazarov who, situated in Russia of 1959, maintained a rebellious attitude towards his parents and the dominant social system of the time. This manner of understanding Nihilism as a form of rebellion is not necessarily negative; but, instead, the possibility of two meanings based on the same term of Nihilism, can be speculated. “In the positive meaning: the philosophical destruction of all presupposition and all immediate fact; in the negative, on the contrary, the destruction of the evidences and certainties of the common sense, on behalf of the idealist speculation” (Note 9).

Hegel refers to the topic with a more profound concept when he warns in his youth that a fundamental task of philosophy is the knowledge of Nothingness; to arrive at the fulfillment of the true Nothingness. However, the first authentic theorization of a philosophical position that can be graded as Nihilism, though in absence of the explicit use of the concept, appears in Max Stirner with his piece *El único y su propiedad* [One and His Property] in which he defends the creation of an individual sense that is not tied down with deterministic transcendences; in other words, that comes from Nothingness. Another German, Schopenhauer, bravely assumes the tricky topic and affirms that, “only when man has abandoned all of his pretensions and has been redirected to a naked existence and stripped, will he be able to participate in the tranquility of spirit that constitutes the fundament of human happiness” (Note 10).

Here is observed a Nihilism which is nevertheless promising; it is a Nihilism that fructifies – under certain conditions– into something positive for the human being. Following Schopenhauer, one of the most representative Nihilisms is Nietzsche’s, with who the concept “nihilist” ends up fitting in Western philosophy. However, the common interpretations towards Nietzsche have reduced him upon associating a negative sense to him before his proposal of the absolute elimination of all possible construct. In an exaggerated manner, he has been related with issues of decadence, pessimism, and even inhumanity. I must make it noted that it is precisely this negative sense that has been commonly given to the term Nihilism, which has not allowed the Western world the consideration of a conception of Nothingness that participates in the development, both individual and social, of the contemporary man.

The essential difference between Nothingness and Nihilism is, then, that the latter’s objective is the comprehension of the first. However, neither does it completely possess it, nor is it the only possible boarding of Nothingness. In spite of the term “Nihilism” being commonly associated to destruction, the possibility of understanding Nothingness outside of the common Nihilisms would have to be

considered; or, understanding the Nothingness that is exempt from the nihilist labeling; or, understanding a new manner of Nihilism which, more than exhaust the possibilities of individual human fulfillment, would vindicate them by denying them, lose interest in them.

Among the points of convergence between the conception of Nothingness which is proposed here and Nihilism in particular, are the recognition that the forthcoming does not point to something in particular but, rather, to Nothingness itself. That a finalism of things is recognized, but that this is not determined by human appreciation or by personal affects or interests; instead it escapes even our perception and cognition. There is also a similitude when the inexistence of a unifying principle that determines the forthcoming is assumed ineludibly; and, therefore, it is also recognized that there is no universal sense for human life. On a different note, the main divergence between Nihilism and the conception of Nothingness presented here consists in that we are to consider Nothingness –the one I refer to– as a necessary and unassailable medium for humanization; a paradigm beyond metaphysics which supposes a distinct comprehension of the sense of human life, and not as a motive for despondency or dejection. Assuming Nothingness allows us to understand that univocal realities don't exist and have never existed, as Volpi affirms. “We no longer have a privileged perspective –neither religion, nor myth, nor art, nor metaphysics, nor politics, nor morality, nor even science– capable of speaking for all the others” (Note 11).

Certainly, assuming Nothingness can give us the conscience that we are without roots, without pre-established goals or predefined trajectories; more than only the forthcoming, a forthcoming that remains inexplicable to our cognoscibility. In this mind-frame there isn't either a single route of understanding what human development or growth is; and, thus, the schemes which may propose it as an absolute and predefined issue are blind to the reality of Nothingness.

Human progress, the best humanly possible, is not something that exists but that is defined from the specific conditions of each human. There are no principles and much less is there a universal morality; there is only the possibility of construction based on certainly limited conceptions which are changing, imminent, and fragile. Human development, or the idea of what is better for the human person as an unequivocal issue, is nothing more than chimera.

Assuming human development from a conception of Nothingness is to recognize its univocal impossibility and to affirm the polivocity of the meaning of development itself in Nothingness. It is then not about living isolated from the conventions, but “to operate with the conventions without believing in them too much” (Note 12) assuming that they only are in the human mind and for very limited time-frames.

5. Conclusions

In ancient Greece, nothingness used to be confused with the not-being; that was one of the central motives due to which the great philosophers like Aristotle didn't delve deeply into its study. Different from the not-being, which requires a being to be the denial of, nothingness does not demonstrate a

dependence on what is; on the contrary, what is, demonstrates a dependence on nothingness in the sense that it is required in order for the being to distinguish itself from nothingness. At the same time, everything that has never existed remains in nothingness' lap, such as everything that will cease to be will return to it. In that optic, distinct from the not-being that is always latent before the things that are, nothingness is not latent but is, rather, in action and in the present, containing of everything that has not come to be. Under that optic, everything that exists now was, in the moment previous to its creation, contained by nothingness.

Nihilism, as the study of nothingness, is not a discipline that exhausts the understanding of what nothingness is. This is because the nihilistic posture focuses on what can be intuitively known about nothingness, yet little can be grasped about what is not a product of intellection and lies beyond its scope. In this sense, all forms of nihilism are inherently partial in both their perspective and their conclusions. Similarly, any ontology centered solely on being, while neglecting attention to nothingness, is equally partial, as it fails to account for the enabling dialectic between being and what lies beyond it.

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Notes

- Note 1. Heisig, *Filósofos de la nada*, p. 12.
- Note 2. Cfr. Aristóteles, *Lambda* 2.
- Note 3. Aristóteles, *Lambda* 1069b 26.
- Note 4. Düring, *Aristóteles: exposición e interpretación de su pensamiento*, p. 326.
- Note 5. Aristóteles, *Zeta* 15, 1039b 26.
- Note 6. Volpi, *El Nihilismo*, p. 15.
- Note 7. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, p. 382.
- Note 8. Volpi, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-22.
- Note 9. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
- Note 10. Schopenhauer *apud* Volpi, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
- Note 11. Volpi, *op. cit.*, p. 173.
- Note 12. *Ibidem*.