

Nihilism: The Root of the Revolution of the Modern Age

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From Reader Review Nihilism: The Root of the Revolution of the Modern Age for online ebook

Ted says

Taken from a book that was never published it's a series of essays by a Russian Orthodox priest in 1960 about the state of man in the mid 20th century. Very informative, but kind of dull to read a parts when he goes off tangent into metaphysics, and occasionally would lapse off into orthodox mysticism that my low church Protestant background can't really understand. Would recommend for general philosophy and Christian thinking.

Ephraim Lawson Bowick says

Not his best. This work was penned the year Eugene (later Fr. Seraphim) Rose was received in the Church.

Steve says

There is a threefold purpose of the nihilist revolution, according to Rose,

1. the destruction of the old order
 2. the making of the "new earth"
 3. the fashioning of the "new man"
-

Jwf says

I did not enjoy this book, and did not agree with almost everything that the author had to say; it was still an interesting trip into a dark and scary way of thinking.

Ruchika Soni says

More profoundly, Nihilist "simplification" may be seen in the universal prestige today accorded the lowest order of knowledge, the scientific, as well as the simplistic ideas of men like Marx, Freud, and Darwin, which underlie virtually the whole of contemporary thought and life.

David says

Recently, these are a few things I have come to recognize as truth:

- order does not come from chaos without intelligent intervention.

and

- the postmodern argument, the idea of relative truth is deeply logically flawed and self-contradictory because assertion of relative truth is itself absolute
- therefore a belief in absolute truth is the only non-contradictory logical conclusion
- absolute truth is absolute and must therefore exist independent of my perception of truth and also exists without observation. Unfortunately, therefore, my personal wishes are irrelevant to any understanding of absolute truth.
- any coherent concept of morality presupposes a knowledge of absolute truth

These are fragments (and by no means conclusive in their current state) that may lead to a logical syllogism of something like: therefore a God exists and as an ordered and logical being I have a moral obligation to Him as my creator. This is not what I want to think. I want to be free from moral obligation, I want to believe in the ubermensch, in myself as an ubermensch, I want to be free to do as I want without repercussion. Unfortunately, I am starting to see this is not true.

Eugene Rose competently deconstructs nihilism in all its current forms but doesn't quite build the bridge to faith. Rose defends his theology from a perspective well-informed by philosophy and literature which I something I totally dig. Made me realize I need to read more of the Russians.

Yogy TheBear says

A great insight into Nihilism, with a lot of ideas that I already felt and perceived, but did not have the skill to express about it.

As a orthodox myself, Seraphim's point of view is very logical and near to me, despite a radicalism that someone with a more western upbringing may perceive it.

By only problem with Rose is the initial chapter on Liberalism, witch I did not felt to be also including libertarianism, my political identity. I actualy totaly agree with his observation on the lack of a strong connection with God in the liberal mind, but this is a generalization and liberalism should not be considered phase one of nihilism. A person with a liberal mindset, or political/philosophical identity may also be in search of that superior Truth, and in such a state are actualy many people, including orthodox.

Overall the book is a very necessary one for all orthodox and people concerned with nihilism.

Blake Reas says

Not a bad book. The work looks to me like the inchoate thoughts of someone coming into their own. Rose has some interesting critiques of modern culture though, and some of them anticipate Charles Taylor in "A Secular Age". For instance, Rose walks is through the stages of Nihilism and in his explanation (I'm paraphrasing from memory) he notes that modern man is only concerned with this world and not any other world, and that this leads to nihilism because this world in its contingency and impermanence cannot be a foundation for meaning. It is from that observation, similar to Taylor's "Imminent Frame" that Rose shows four stages of Nihilism: 1) classical liberalism- makes all ideas equal, and leads to uncertainty 2) Realism- a reductive view of the world. Any spiritual aspect of man is reduced to the physical (reason, consciousness

etc.). God is at best a wish fulfillment, and science and technology will build our future. Bolshevism and Naziism. 3) Vitalism- a revolt against Realism. This can be seen in the irrational poets like Shelley, Wordsworth and other of the Romantic reaction who tried to find messages from beyond from a vague power. Many poets of this period spoke of the poet as a prophet. 4) Destruction- these are the Anarchist like Bakunin, Proudhon and others. They want to tear down the present order, but once they get the world they want, they will begin work destroying that as well.

Rose's writing is interesting and easy to follow. The book has the drawbacks of an unfinished work. The book was originally aimed to be a chapter in a wider work, which Rose unfortunately never finished.

Jacob Verville says

Rose presents Nihilism in a compelling and fair way, attempting to understand it in its origin and to show its perspectives. He then, of course, very compellingly condemns it and presents the traditionalist Christian perspective. It is definitely a must read for people who are curious about traditionalist perspectives on the modern world -- I'd even say that people who are not Christians would learn a lot as well, and those who are conservative Christians would find it to be a very breakthrough reading.

This was one of those books that was simultaneously hard to put down and hard to continue reading because of the fact that it is so enjoyable, but due to it being so condensed and fast paced, and covering material from a perspective not often voiced, it was also challenging. Terrific book.

Dorothea says

When I read this it pissed me off so much I threw it against a wall.

Purnacandra Sivarupa says

Setting aside the author's Christian exclusivism, this essay (an extract from what was originally projected to be a much larger book, never completed) is one of the best I've seen for pointing out the very real emptiness of the modern model of humanity and human life. The author's passionate voice reveals his deep conviction, but at no point gives way to mere fanaticism or shallow histrionics. Especially for the Perennialist or Traditionalist, this book has a lot of gold to mine.

Alan says

An excellent book by the late Fr. Seraphim Rose. This was written before Rose became a monk and was more philosophically oriented.

Clayton Stewart says

Another essential read for Christians to understand the modern world and where it's headed.

Some brilliant passages:

"In this room Eugene undertook to write a monumental chronicle of modern man's war against God: man's attempt to destroy the Old Order and raise up a new one without Christ, to deny the existence of the Kingdom of God and raise up his own earthly utopia in its stead. This projected work was entitled *The Kingdom of Man and the Kingdom, of God*.

Only a few years before this, Eugene himself had been ensnared in the Kingdom of Man and had suffered in it; he too had been at war against God. Having rejected the Protestant Christianity of his formative years as being weak and ineffectual, he had taken part in the Bohemian counterculture of the 1950's, and had delved into Eastern religions and philosophies which taught that God is ultimately impersonal. Like the absurdist artists and writers of his day, he had experimented with insanity, breaking down logical thought processes as a way of "breaking on over to the other side." He read the words of the mad "prophet" of Nihilism, Friedrich Nietzsche, until those words resonated in his soul with an electric, infernal power. Through all these means, he was seeking to attain to Truth or Reality with his mind; but they all resulted in failure. He was reduced to such a state of despair that, when later asked to describe it, he could only say, "I was in Hell." He would get drunk, and would grapple with the God Whom he had claimed was dead, pounding on the floor and screaming at Him to leave him alone. Once while intoxicated, he wrote, "I am sick, as all men are sick who are absent from the love of God."

"Atheism," Eugene wrote in later years, "true 'existential' atheism burning with hatred of a seemingly unjust or unmerciful God, is a spiritual state; it is a real attempt to grapple with the true God Whose ways are so inexplicable even to the most believing of men, and it has more than once been known to end in a blinding vision of Him Whom the real atheist truly seeks. It is Christ Who works in these souls. The Antichrist is not to be found primarily in the great deniers, but in the small affirmers, whose Christ is only on the lips. Nietzsche, in calling himself Antichrist, proved thereby his intense hunger for Christ....""

"The Liberal, the worldly man, is the man who has lost his faith; and the loss of perfect faith is the beginning of the end of the order erected upon that faith. Those who seek to preserve the prestige of truth without believing in it offer the most potent weapon to all their enemies; a merely metaphorical faith is suicidal. The radical attacks the Liberal doctrine at every point, and the veil of rhetoric is no protection against the strong thrust of his sharp blade. The Liberal, under this persistent attack, gives way on point after point, forced to admit the truth of the charges against him without being able to counter this negative, critical truth with any positive truth of his own; until, after a long and usually gradual transition, of a sudden he awakens to discover that the Old Order, undefended and seemingly indefensible, has been overthrown, and that a new, more "realistic"--and more brutal-truth has taken the field."

Heinz Reinhardt says

This is a portion of a, sadly incomplete, manuscript Fr. Rose was working on which he had intended to deal with the entirety of the Revolutionary(modern) Age, and it's terrible failure from an Orthodox Christian

perspective.

As he makes so very clear in this fragment of his intended work, the modern age has been a failure of violence, sadness, despair, ugliness and hatred precisely because of the Enlightenment.

The Enlightenment, the framework of modern Western society, has as it's logical conclusion the horrors of Nihilism. Nihilism, a belief in nothing, itself a Satanic reversal of the Divinely intended worship of said Divine, has led to the Revolution (by which Fr. Rose means not just Marxism, the most obvious, but the whole evolution of said - starting with the Jacobins of the French Revolution, carrying over to the Anarchists of the late 19th Century, the Marxists/Bolsheviks, as well as the Fascists and the National Socialists; all of whom are related to each other, and all of whom stem from the same root), and the Revolution has only succeeded in destroying the two most important things to the life of the human species: truth and faith.

When discussing the fracturing and hopelessness of society, it needs to be born in mind that Fr. Rose wrote this in the 60's, and one wonders what his thoughts would be on the Materialist and radical Individualist nightmare Western society has morphed into since his own concerned observations.

Although only a fragment of a larger work never completed, this is an excellent little work that makes some wonderful observations on just what truly underpins the darkness of the present age.

Lance Conley says

This is a must read. It'll help you understand quite a bit and helps you see how modern man is headed for disaster thanks to taking the lies of nihilistic thought.
