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A LITTLE BEYOND THE COMMON SENSE

(Essay and aphorisms)

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Due to the coefficient of the density of the “thinking substance” in the verbal universe, the aphoristic occupies a place analogous to the *white dwarfs*, the most compact stars in the cosmic universe. The aphoristic tries to recover an almost forgotten capacity in our kaleidoscopic and accelerated time: to inculcate a slow and meditative reading so that the reader thinks about the content of the ironic sayings and the paradoxical phrases not only for fun or simply to take them into consideration, but as an invitation to a joint reflection without ruling out the possibility of imagining or inventing something more original, refined, or profound. Of course, not every aphorism expresses new things, but at least it expresses them like no one has expressed them before. The aphoristic is unimaginable without a metaphor, which is a language “intentional error”, a way of putting two terms in relationship so that their referents come closer and thus open the possibility of being able to say more than what common sense allows us.

The aphoristic expresses something strange in the usual; it is a protest, however shy it may be, against the power of common sense, an invitation to experience the adventure of thinking and thus obtain the pleasure of the game of bizarre paradoxes and the mockery of mischievous irony. For the aphorist, the effort of “lifting the weight” of common sense and at the same time express the current thinking stereotypes inertia that we do not usually observe is the most

difficult thing, just as we do not notice atmospheric pressure. Under the term "aphorism" I understand not only experience, but sober experience, and for this reason most of the texts here presented are, in their essence, *de-fascination exercises*, following Emil Cioran's term.

As of the 20th century, humanity entered a historical phase in which each new generation inherits from the previous one not only the sum of the productive forces, but, like a pack animal, is forced to carry in its back, the growing weight of deformities: the nuclear threat, overpopulation, regional conflicts, polluted atmosphere, lack of drinking water, overheating of the oceans, destruction of natural ecosystems, infectious pandemics, among others. Starting from these self-destructive tendencies, many people are inclined to think that growing for the sake of growing is not only a mechanism of action of cancer cells, but an algorithm of human civilization in whose "body" the malignant metastases sinister symptoms have already appeared. It cannot be excluded that humanity has not yet worked out the wisdom to distinguish the main from the passing or the secondary; it cannot foresee the real changes and their remote consequences, and, to make matters worse, it became the main threat to itself. One of the causes that pushes man to the precipice of disasters is that he does not simply live, like all other species, but is obsessed with *living well*, and this thirst for *insatiable happiness* that does not even ask: if it is deserved or not? hides within itself the outbreaks of the evil of selfishness and its derivatives: antagonism, exploitation, subjugation, corruption, crime, deceit, demagoguery, vanity, the desire to do less and obtain more, and many other anthropological, social and moral deficiencies. Here we come across the "*self-threat arguments*" that make us rethink the paradigms of unlimited development, which constitute the foundations of teleological rationality, and ask ourselves some questions: would it be possible to configure new goals, ends, foundations, forms of life and production that could curb and transcend the suicidal tendencies of modern humanity?

To withstand the harmful effects of the egocentrism of our fellow human beings, perhaps we should invent a detonating mixture of Rabelais's laughter, Kafka's irony, Swift's sarcasm, Gogol's humor and throw it left and right against all those demagogic misanthropes, that in the name of *happiness, improvement, progress, vanguard, prosperity, success, democracy, or the better life* (so longed for and desired, glorified, and sanctified), in fact, they prepare a catastrophe for our species. Even the great "masters of suspicion" -Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud- who were quite forceful in their overwhelming and crushing critique of "civilized man", in their positive theories, whose core consists in the radical transformation of society, of man and, its values, nowadays seem debatable, problematic, and unilateral. Why? Because

all of them started from the premise (explicit or implicit) that the human being is not only perfectible but inspired by incessant progress and by the efforts of his *ought to be*, he will reach the most perfect level possible, in full possession of all its praxeological, epistemological and axiological powers in a future perfect society.

If Lamarck had been right, and each new human generation had always been able to advance in the direction of progress and greater efficiency than before and inherit the biological and psychic changes accumulated during its lifetime, the utopian project of the radiant future would obtain a very solid foundation. According to the English anthropologist Adam Kuper, the idea that traits acquired in one generation could be passed on to the next one was a notion shared by most biologists of the 19th and early 20th centuries, including, at times, Darwin himself. In their projects related to the harmonious society construction and the human nature radical change, many theorists and practitioners of social transformation did not pay due attention to a simple fact: each new generation is forced to reach maturity, intellectual and moral sagacity from scratch.

In his famous book *The Selfish Gene*, Richard Dawkins asserts that man, like all other animals, represents a machine built by genes whose decisive quality is *unrelenting selfishness*. The task posed by the British biologist does not consist in the preaching of some morality, based on the theory of evolution, but in a description and explanation of how and according to what rules the living being's development proceeds. In this sense, the term *selfishness* is understood as the immanently inherent attribute of any living being who submits to the natural selection mechanism and who, from birth to death, has to live by itself, be an independent and autonomous organism, despite the fact that he is incorporated into some biological unit and gets some help from this group and has some ties of mutual reciprocity. Human existence, like the life of any living being, is subject to the laws of "biological logic", but it is not exhausted by it. Richard Dawkins rightly states that we must understand what our own genes tend towards and then we may have, at least, a chance to divert their intentions, which no other species close to ours is capable of. Our genes are always going to incline us to be selfish, but we are not forced to submit to them, we behave as if the "genetic imperative" was an inexorable fatality. *Genes regulate the organism construction, but do not include acquired traits in their plans*. It does not matter how much knowledge, practical habits, or moral wisdom the human being accumulated, but not a single drop of these obtained qualities will pass to their children through genetics.

In my opinion, modern men, being hostage to his own egoism, crossed the limits that evolution prescribed for him and attempted against the deep foundations of his own existence. The more history develops, the more we are inclined to think that nature, in its evolutionary process, "stumbled" against homo sapiens, who turned it into his fief and history into an uninterrupted chain of cruel and absurd struggles. *Could our descendants save the human being great evolutionary project from the threat of historical bankruptcy?* Will future generations know how to overcome the ever-deeper rupture between man and his world and between man and his fellow human beings, a cleavage that was established by evolution itself and then considerably deepened by history?

In his famous essay on universal history, Kant expressed this same idea in the form of a brief and allegorical aphorism: "*With a piece of wood as twisted as man, nothing can be made completely straight.*" Therefore, the contrary thesis that affirms that man, (or more precisely, his "nature"), was built of straight wood, is wrong and, therefore, all attempts to straighten it, at least its biological nature, are destined to fail. Culture as "second nature" can remove the biological limit imposed by "first nature". But, is it possible to completely transform the corporeal, behavioral and psychic substrate of homo sapiens formed in the process of natural evolution of many millions of years?

Ten thousand years defining the post-agricultural changes that have brought us to the present is minuscule when compared to our evolution long history. "It's only 0.2 percent of the time since our ancestors diverged from chimpanzee lineage; 0.6 percent of the time since the appearance of Homo erectus, the first member of our genus (Homo); 2.5 percent of all the time Neanderthals lived on this planet; and about 5 percent of the time, we ourselves have been here in some aspect or form that we can be sure to call Homo sapiens." (Clive Finlayson. *El sueño del neandertal*. Crítica, Barcelona, 2010, p. 233.) At birth, civilization is characterized by the language formation, the agriculture creation, the animal's domestication, the iron and steel appearance, housing construction, writing development, trade, the state power establishment, religion spread and closely linked with them wars, slavery and exploitation. The evolutionary twilights of the homo sapiens future were replaced by the bloody dawn of its history.

In man everything is natural and at the same time, everything is artificial; in it there is practically no gesture, desire or behavior in which only biological impulses, needs and emotions are manifested, separated from reason, will, memory or acquired habits. As a being endowed with rational knowledge, he is destined for unlimited development, but because

being biologically insufficient, he can never reach somatic and emotional-affective perfection. Culture, as a "second nature", can remove the biological limit imposed by "first nature", but is it possible to transform its corporeal-sensory substrate that has been formed in the evolutionary process over millions of years? If evolution made the human being riddled with defects, perhaps it is because evolution itself, guided by natural selection, expended enormous efforts, and, despite all the setbacks, managed to create something real out of the almost impossible: a *rational centaur* whose life is not every time submitted to the demands of his reason. As a nature bastard, man subjugated her through his artifices and now, step by step, reduces the sphere of the natural of his own existence impregnated by the derivatives of his industrial production. Perhaps, only the threat of an ecological catastrophe and the danger of his own extinction would force him to limit the expansion of the artificial in the natural, since only the balanced coexistence of these two principles -- antagonistic and, at the same time, complementary- is at the foundation of the driving force of evolution, and constitutes the reason enough for the history of humanity as a unique species not only on our planet, but in the explored cosmos.

Everyone knows that the calf is ready, very soon after being born, to follow its mother, and the kitten assure their feeding after a month of birth. Meanwhile, the child is forced to depend on the adults for many years. But, on the other hand, when the organs of the human baby begin to grow, he already has a sufficiently developed brain and is capable of learning such things that no other animal can achieve. Even the anthropological constitutive attributes inherent in our species, such as upright locomotion, speech, imagination, memory, and abstract thought, depend not so much on innate dispositions as on adult teaching. Almost all the actions we carry out every day required, at some point, special attention and a lot of effort to learn: walking, talking, reading, counting, tying our shoes, using a knife and fork, riding a bicycle and even saying "thank you", all these routine habits, in reality, are exercises that cost us a lot of sweat and demanded great patience from our preceptors. But all these and much other acquired knowledge cannot overcome the natural dissatisfaction that engenders an all-encompassing criticism that encourages us to live tomorrow better than today. Precisely this existential discontent, varying from century to century, constitutes a more spontaneous, generic and natural man reaction to his ontological throwing into being.

From this ontological lack arises our "distrust" towards the world, towards our fellow human beings and towards ourselves. And this forces us to search, explore, orient ourselves, and permanently evaluate what is of use to us, what is useful to us, what threatens us, what

hinders us from deciding what to do: to flee or to resist, attack or defend ourselves, subdue or rebel, live with the danger or overcome it? This evaluative-appreciative attitude starts from the premise that values are what the world "endows" to man; and it is also what man "introduces" into the world to make it more understandable, more meaningful to orient himself in and tame it. In general, human being not only finds the values and defines the meaning for himself, but fabricates, invents or imagines them, frequently against the evidence of irritating and cruel reality, averting his gaze, looking away, twisting his head or covering his ears to avoid confrontation with it. All these *evaluative-affective characteristics* are found not only on the outer or inner margins of the supposed cognitive and rational control of our existence, but have accompanied our fellow humans since ancient times, explicitly or implicitly, being, therefore, inseparable from what we do and what happens to us.

Nature's cusp or evolution's bastard?

Adam and Eve ate the apple from the tree of wisdom of good and evil when the fruit was very immature, and history, from the first lithic razor to the atomic bomb, unfortunately confirmed this hypothesis.

Almost all the humanity "butchers" obtained their crimes "justification" with the conviction that they were consecrated by "divine providence" or by the "iron laws" of history.

Sometimes the important thing is not what you achieved, but what price you paid to obtain what you wanted and how many other opportunities you lost.

The masterful trend in the development of the human being is reflected in the change of its ideals: the desire to ascend to the status of the *Titan Prometheus* lowered itself to the level of the *shepherd of being*, then it degenerated into a *robot of existence* and soon, perhaps, it will become in a *cosmic ship castaway* of the planet "Earth".

Man reacts - suffers or rejoices - not so much because of what really happened, but because of how he evaluates what happened.

Our anthropological essence would be different if we did not dislike those who are above or below our possibilities.

Forcing good to serve the forces of evil is a diabolical trick, and yet it is human, all too human.

What misfortune could be compared to the suffering of one who has lost his power or his fortune? The bitter despair, the feeling of being degraded, the loss of meaning in life. Fame and wealth seemed to make him a *superman*. But the superman, descended to the level of an ordinary being, is perceived as an *infra-man*.

One thinks, then drags out a pitiful existence due to the low originality coefficient of his thinking that, nonetheless, he does not want to acknowledge, because for the mediocre man the "better life" is not equivalent to the "better think".

The choice of an existential route diminishes the diffuse intoxication sensation that we had before the different options range. The chosen option is pregnant with joy and, at the same time, with a certain sadness for sacrificing the other possibilities.

What would we do without the concept of "destiny"? To what or who could we blame our mistakes or misfortunes? As a *scapegoat*, fate frees us from the pangs of guilt, but as a *judge*, it makes us tremble before its deadly verdict.

It can be assumed that God created human being in his image and likeness, but perhaps, working in a surreal style?

If for the student to pass an exam can be a trauma, for the teacher to review it, in some cases, makes him lose faith in humanity.

Trying to judge a famous writer by his works protagonists or a great actor by the characters he plays is like trying to represent a crocodile from a garment made from its skin.

The failure of the socialist renewal plans forces modern Prometheans to turn their attention to the biological methods of transformation of the human being: natural selection and the manipulation of genetic inheritance. A series of questions arise from these approaches: what is properly human? What kind of men do we have to produce? And who would be capable of giving us the model of the perfect man that would be worth to create artificially? All these interrogations forget one thing: to maintain their existence, any possible rational being, no matter in what corner of the Universe and in what period it has lived, lives or will live, needs a material substratum and, therefore, cannot be perfect. as a pure spirit, devoid of the corporeal envelope.

Private property could come to an end if looking at the desired object gave us the same satisfaction as its possession.

Perhaps life is not worth living; but if you were thrown into this world, don't be in a hurry to speed your way out: invent yourself a good reason not to drag out a pitiful existence.

Barbarism is inhuman... too human, which allows the barbarian to "justify" his cruelty. The myth about the murder of Abel by Cain is a sinister prologue to the entire history of civilization.

If the mistake is the illegitimate sibling of the truth, then the lie is the bastard child of the justice.

My existence is "almost nothing", from which it is quite easy to pass into nothing. But I don't because that "almost" is all I have.

In the fight for a "great cause" first the combatants die, then the greatness is eclipsed, then the cause collapses, and, to make matters worse, future generations question the heroic deed of their ancestors.

As soon as philosophy stopped explaining the world and began to change it, the weapon of criticism became the criticism of the weapon, and that philosophy became a dogma that sacralized the right of despotic power to possess the truth in the last instance.

Schopenhauer said: "The more I talk to men, the more I admire my dog." For a few decades with the appearance of the Internet and the cell phone, the alienation between human beings deepened to such a degree that the canine industry emerged. In this manner, the ironic statement of the German philosopher not only lost its meaning but became a grotesque reality.

Reason is not capable of understanding the incomprehensible, but it is capable of understanding that it is impossible to understand it, based on the level of maturity reached by current epistemological resources.

Auschwitz and Kolyma showed that the tragic alternative –to be or not to be– can become a monstrous nightmare by forcing man to subsist on the brink of death and, at the same time, taking away his only freedom, the possibility of putting an end to his unbearable existence.

The banal is expected, too expected, that we would like to send it to hell, but we understand that, without the obvious, life also runs the risk of falling into there.

When the things of logic eclipse the logic of things, the pedant does not take long to appear.

There are people who love the truth for the truth itself. But most practice it because they anticipate the shame they will feel when the lie is discovered.

The cynic is an impudent lucidity maniac, passionate about disappointment, whose supreme ideal is the "ataraxia of nothingness."

In the soul of every pedant sleeps the fear of being a loser. And in the soul of every loser hides the hope of achieving victory if the past could have been reversed.

Homo sapiens is not only the *nature's apex* but also the *fugitive of being*, an "animal" that compensates for its "organic deficiencies" at the expense of the development of its reason and will, which are the instruments of knowledge, evaluation, and transformation of the world. Human existence differs from the way of being of any other animal, and this unusual character of its state constitutes the primary reason for our perplexity: *it is less natural to be a man than to just live*. The latter statement does not mean that man, as a living being, does not share any bodily, behavioral and emotional traits with other animals. As *material* beings, we are in space and last in time; as *living* beings, we feel and perceive, and as *knowing* individuals, we think, know, evaluate, create cultural artifices and, therefore, we exist.

Time: transformer of values

The future is while it *will be*, the past is insofar as it *was*; only the present *is*, because by incessantly devouring what is *not yet* and discarding it in what *is no longer*, it constitutes itself as a *being* stretched between the two abysses of non-being.

Each one comes into the world without having been asked for permission, and does not want to abandon it, and does not even want to retire, even though the new generations beg him, and his own conscience reproaches him.

The current time acceleration caused by the rush of technological innovations leads to a *present contraction* and breeds *chronocracy*, an arrogant mentality that proclaims: "new is always better than old". And this leads us to mistakenly think that stopping is equivalent to *falling*; that speed is synonymous with efficiency; that the present is a springboard for the future and that the past is of no use.

Man is a dissatisfied being and that is why his ideals, as a lyrical compensation for his dissatisfaction with reality, will never fade, just as his eagerness to obtain recognition from his peers will not disappear in his desire. for overtaking them.

Life is a mocking clown. What else can we expect from the "draft" that we hastily compose by trial and error without thinking about the negative consequences that we only "correct" in the pluperfect tense.

Time has no beginning or end; it is like an arrow that flies forward without ceasing, because it is irreversible. Thinking about time is always thinking about something else that, nevertheless, gives us the illusion of getting closer to it. We confuse time with history and the events that form it. But neither history nor what happens in it is time *sensu stricto* are its anthropological images. As Vladimir Yankélévitch points out, "time is somehow a chronic disease, that of the sick man who experiences it."

Justice is the second victim of the crime that gives the offended the reason to fight against his offender and not give up.

Maybe life is not worth living; but if you were thrown into this world, don't be in a hurry to "go back to where you came from"; come up with a good reason to be self-sufficient.

The Russian writer Varlam Shalamov, who spent almost 20 years in the Kolyma concentration camp, worked together with a religious young man who implored God to order his death. One day the new "instructor" decided to feed the "skinny" ones better so that they could comply with the work norm. But a "rich" meal did not restore his strength; however, that portion was enough for the young man to get up and go into the forbidden area. The escort yelled: Stop! Stop! And then, a shot exploded, and another... Later, the writer narrates, I understood that "it was that portion of porridge that my companion was missing to decide to commit suicide. Sometimes man needs to hurry so as not to lose his will to die."

The dream about a radiant future is often a retouched copy of the present, freed from all its deficiencies, a castrated *time*.

The beginning of each day offers us possibilities to make our surrounding a little better, and at twilight we find "excuses" to justify not having done so.

When the historian considers only what happened and does not pay attention to what could have happened, he deprives the past of the drama of life.

We are all captives of the memories of the past, hostages of the pluperfect, ambitious nostalgic beings who would like to go back in time to extract an imaginary benefit from unrealized possibilities.

Future is a *deceiver-sorcerer*; it tempts us with the magic of its hopes, but when it becomes on the today it shows us the reverses of his mundane tricks.

From time to time "the eternal" shows its face... in the experiences of ecstasy, earthly prototype of heavenly bliss.

Unusual events form significant milestones in the flow of our lives, and then, over time, they appear in our memory like little islands bathed by the ocean of colorless events. And only a nostalgic smile softens the irrevocability of what happened.

We are always in the present, but the past and the future try to make it a remembrance of our memory or a *harbinger* of our hope. And only in critical or dramatic intervals does the present transform them into its servants.

From time to time, I pass through time in my imagination, and I involuntarily repeat the questions that Pascal posed centuries ago: "I am amazed to see myself here and not there, because there is no reason to be here and not there, now and not in another time . . . Who has put me here? By whose order and will this place and this time have been destined for me? The answer to this question is the chance that used my parents' love encounter, in which a single sperm surpassed hundreds of millions of its rivals and penetrated the ovum and formed a fertilized cell, remote precursor of "me", unique and unrepeatable.

Who vehemently wants to reach a goal is perceived as an arrow from a taut bow that is ready to shoot at any moment. It even seems to him that time itself begins to tremble with impatience to achieve what is desired.

Only one event can turn a man into a martyr: his appearance in the world. And a single thought can justify his existence: "Perhaps I am neither intelligent, nor handsome, nor happy, nor famous, rather I am ordinary, simple, and humble. But, my life, unique and unrepeatable, belongs to me and only to me, since never, in the centuries of the centuries, and in no corner

of the infinite Universe has not existed and never will exist a being identical to my singular "me". In human self-awareness lies its greatness and, at the same time, its tragedy.

Time is a magician: it transforms the ugly duckling into a funny swan; but it is also a sorcerer: he plucks a majestic bird and makes it look like a crooked crow. The one who is tempered by disappointment has immunity against despair, but also runs the risk of becoming cynical.

Chance is unpredictable, but by disrupting our plans, it does not exceed the limits of the possible. The "almost" makes it something to consider.

Our life is too short to learn everything, and too long to die and not understand this truth, which, however, does not nullify our claim to superiority nor protect us from inferiority complexes.

According to Marcus Aurelius, life's duration has no importance because we live in the present's instant and, therefore, the age at which we will die does not matter, because we only lose that instant and nothing else. The past cannot be lost, because it no longer exists, nor does the future, since we still do not have it. Saying goodbye to life is not easy at any moment, but the idea that the last moment crowns the millions of moments that have passed brings us, contrary to the opinion of the Roman Emperor, a small consolation.

The concept of time is frequently structured with metaphorical sentences. For example, the comparison of time with money is expressed in such linguistic turns: man spends, loses, saves, squanders, cares, calculates, invests time; experiences its scarcity, feels its lack, appreciates its cost, uses it for its benefit, thanks for its loan. However, the identification of *time* with *money* depends on determined economic relations that elevate money to the status of the universal equivalent of human wealth. That means that time, despite its equivalence with money, is not it since the time spent is impossible to return. There are no *time banks* either. I can, for example, spend a lot of time to educate my son, but he is not able to *give me back my lost time*, although he can spend the same amount of *his time* to show me his gratitude

We rebel against destiny in two ways: the inexorable that awaits us all and that we refuse to accept, and the irreparable that has already happened and that we would like to resurrect to change it.

Thinking about nothing is difficult; not thinking anything is even more difficult because the human brain cannot help but to think, and it does not matter that its object is as difficult as the idea of “nothing”.

Age degrades us, but sometimes it rewards our losses with some discoveries: it devalues previous illusions and frees us from useless worries.

Today is difficult if it is loaded with tomorrow's tasks and yesterday's unfulfilled obligations.

Death endows us with his favorite feeling - anguish - which is ready to extend its hand to us if it sees that we will soon extend our paw.

Not all contemporary classics stand the test of time. Frequently, old age lowers them in rank and death deprives them of the title.

The first disappointments appear on the school control card, and the final ones, in the last diagnosis of the attending physician.

Before the use of painkillers, the consciousness of the dying person was diluted in his pain. Modern anesthesia, by removing discomfort, removes from our numb consciousness the idea that we are dying and deprives us of the opportunity to utter our last words to our descendants.

It's hard to live up to the demands of these days without the risk of becoming neurotic or on the verge of having a heart attack.

In early old age we are like a sated cat that continues to watch the mice run but no longer feels like catching them.

In their aspiration to happiness, the *lover* would like to stop the present; the *desperate* would like to jump through the wall of the here and now; and the *guilty*, in his eagerness to return to the state of innocence, would long to redo what he did before. The magic that guides our emotions is a *rebellion* (in the pluperfect tense) against Hegel's thesis that "everything real is rational, and everything rational is real".

Death equalizes us all: prominent and insignificant. What injustice for the former and what consolation for the latter!

How time flies: my peers are bald or gray, they prefer not to talk about themselves anymore; instead, they brag about the "accomplishments" of their children or grandchildren.

The ancient Greeks consoled themselves with the idea that wars, despite their horrors, are a "forge of heroes." Kant does not share this illusion and agrees with Antisthenes's sarcastic sentence that war is an evil force, since it creates more villains than it exterminates. For every human being to end his life with his own death, humanity must ensure *perpetual peace*. The alternative between war and peace, the German philosopher leads it to the implacable antithesis that excludes an intermediate and conciliatory line: perpetual peace between peoples or eternal peace in cemeteries; any allusion to a third *a priori* is excluded. This conclusion has become more present today than ever and agrees with the unanimously accepted idea that if a *Third World War* was to break out, there would be neither victors nor losers; even more, life on our planet would be at risk of disappearing.

Natural selection is the cause of the appearance of homo sapiens as a teleological being that does everything possible to accelerate his own *final cause*.

There are three forms of “chronocide”: the sacrifice of the *elusive now* for the sake of the *still enigmatic*; the nostalgic reverence before the *already* sacred at the expense of the *now boring*; and the subjugation of the *still threatening* and the *already decrepit already* to the *now prevailing*.

Being concerned about things that will never happen is a blissful misfortune, equivalent to the invention of a powerful atomic bomb that can never be used, because whoever dares to do so will perish from their own use.

When a “great idea” begins to die, its followers gather around its “ghostly body” and glorify it in the “we could have”.

Sometimes memory acts like a sentimental widow: it remembers the attractive qualities of its late husband, but forgets the bitter tears shed over conjugal infidelity.

The earthly life of man is an instant compared to eternity, but the quality of his "immortal life" in the afterlife depends precisely on that instant.

Hope and illusion

Before, people lived “worse” than today, but the ranks of adherents of faith in a bright future were longer, and that very faith, which we now perceive as a utopian illusion, unleashed frenzied passions.

The dawn of hope fades into disappointment or becomes a nostalgia suffused with *elegiac charm*.

Irony of destiny: you wait, you wait, trembling with impatience to achieve a desired goal..., and suddenly you receive a strong butt punch that transports you from the world of sweet dreams to the harsh reality.

Many thinkers of the past dreamed of taking the ship of humanity to the "happy isles" of utopia. Karl Marx tried to achieve this goal by relying on a theoretically elaborated path. But was the prophet wrong in his predictions? Were the captains not up to their high mission? Or were the sailors not prepared enough for a long and exhausting voyage? But it is a fact that the "socialism ship" crashed against the *reefs of human nature*, and the storms of history ran aground. Now that ship sails in the ocean of time without a compass, and nobody knows where our species is heading and what awaits it from now on. Could our descendants save the great civilizing project of human reason from the threat of bankruptcy?

Patience is a canned hope with an expiration date. After that period, the threat arises that it "explodes" out of despair or that it "goes sour" out of boredom.

Disappointment makes us suffer and at the same time makes us think that we are finally free from false illusions and that we will be able to look at the world with disenchanted eyes.

When I see on the TV screen how politicians hug each other, I involuntarily remember the phrase: "from a pat on the back to a kick in the butt, the distance is very short".

We do not know what awaits us in the future. If it were not so, we would not carelessly say goodbye to the past to shed bitter tears in the future.

The possibility possesses magical properties, because it is capable of influencing reality precisely to the extent of its *non-concretion*. Threat and hope are two affective dimensions of possibility. The threat of punishment is a more effective means of enforcing the law than the punishment itself; and hope impels to continue with life and even to make it a little better.

The future in the present is a forger of dreams; the present in the future is an illusions sweeper.

When we witness extravagant events, our amazement increases when we think about how we will narrate them to others. Even in concentration camps, one of the causes that gave the prisoner the impulse to survive was his desire to transmit to later generations the whole truth about the terrible crimes of the nazi executioners and the implausible sufferings of the innocent prisoners.

What is anxiety but a neurosis caused by our obsession about making every moment productive. It is a pathological effect of the extreme rationality of our behavior that does not want to understand that we are finite beings.

Every human being knows where and when they were born, but it is hard to answer the question: Why did their parents throw them into this world? And has it been worth living in it?

I was lucky to be born in a time when air and water were pure, the institution of courtship did not exist, and pop music was still in diapers.

The Platonic definition of the human being as a hairless biped does not express its essence. However, the hominization begins with the upright position and nudity.

For most, life is a routine interrupted by the sighs of longing of what is just out of reach.

Who with wolves goes to howl is taught; Whoever associates with men must live with his fellow men, whom he despises, and yet he is not able to do without.

At the foundation of all radicalism lies the *pathological rationalism* that compels its followers not only to try to improve the world, but to eradicate any trace of its imperfection.

If we knew the date of our end, we could go through life without wasting time on unrealizable goals; we would work on carrying out tasks whose solution is possible within the limits of our existence. But if that were the case, we would reject many initiatives without even starting them. In addition, knowing our limit would not only paralyze our determination to achieve far-reaching ends, but would also deprive us of the sense of freedom that is only possible by not knowing our end.

Man reveals himself not so much in his achievements as in his failures, and above all, in his excuses to justify them.

Revolutionaries obsessed with utopian ideas are willing to do anything to make them, and even do not hesitate to destroy their peers who refuse to participate in their "sacred cause." Soviet "great peoples' guide" Joseph Stalin told his compatriots: "If you don't know how to materialize Marx and Lenin's socialist construction ideas, we will teach you; if you do not want to participate in this process, we will "re-educate" you in forced labor; and, if you resist, you will sign your death sentence.

Time erases not only what happened, but also what could have happened; and that is why real history appears to us as a realm of what is necessary that cannot be judged, because what happened had no other alternatives. Whereas the past was a present, and its agents had real possibilities and had a certain freedom to opt for one or another decision and, even, reach an optimal one than the one that was finally made.

Do not complain about fate: perhaps fate is prescribed to tolerate you, even though you are *now* furious and curse that decision that you chose by the dictate of pressing circumstances.

When the hunter-gatherer stopped killing and gathering and began to domesticate animals and cultivate plants, he realized that by working, he made time work in his favor so that meat and cereals would grow. Several millennia passed and this vital strategy found its full expression in the famous saying: *time is money*. If the first *stratagem* heralded the appearance of civilized man, the second will probably put an end to its existence. Why? Because to his eagerness to

live to live, he adds living to have more wealth, and, consequently, to have more power over Nature whose maintenance has his limits.

Faced with the inevitable end, my conscience is alarmed and jumps to the eternal questions about the meaning of its life. If death is close, very close, then: what reasons compel me to go on the path of my destiny from the cradle to the grave, competing with close people for recognition and wealth or, simply, earning the bread of every day in the sweat of my brow?

Each one comes into the world without having been asked for permission and does not want to abandon it, despite the begging of new generations or, even, when it is timidly asked by his own moral conscience.

For those who do not want to live or cannot die voluntarily, the temptation to end their own life becomes an obsession unable to abstract from this double impossibility that forces them to drag out a pitiful existence.

What is eternity if not an obsession of the *present* to free itself from its "neighbors", the past and the future, which permanently distract it; eternity is a mania for the greatness of the "now timeless enslaved present" that would like to be totally free and not precede the future or emanate from the past.

Human life is a poisoned gift because it comes with a cruel attribution of smallness in the order of infinity. However, a thinking bug, like millions of its kind, crawls on the surface of the earth, torn by the idea that it is a unique being, and its self-awareness further accentuates its tragic fate.

What did not happen, but what could have happened, sometimes makes us sigh and others to thank luck for avoiding misfortune.

As natural and inevitable as the death of a loved one is, the source of sadness lies in the realization of their uniqueness. Of course, common sense suggests appropriate explanations: fatal coincidence of circumstances, old age, incurable disease. However, however... all these arguments, as forceful as they may be, are not capable of eliminating from our souls the tenacious feeling that this death has something unfair and perfidious.

Life without any goal is meaningless. But the mere fact of raising it enslaves us by petty concerns.

Fantasy, understood as such, is the only "lie" that enriches reality and does not humiliate the truth. With the language, not only fantasy arose, but its derivative, the miracle, loaded with the incredible charm that began to pretend to another, more perfect and authentic, transcendent reality. Unfortunately, miracles always "happen" in the afterlife, while in the hereafter what appears are tricks or, in the best of cases, wonders.

It is not easy to love your neighbor with an empty stomach. But it's even harder to love him with a full belly. But the most terrible thing is to appeal to hunger to justify the morality of cannibals.

Middle class is seen as a support for democracy: it is not too poor to be bought and not too rich to buy the votes of the poor.

There are three difficult moral preachings to fulfill: love your neighbor as yourself, do not reveal other people's secrets and do not boast of your merits.

Some truths please us, as if we had a glass of champagne; others intoxicate us, making us suffer a hangover; and others, make us want to get drunk to such an extent that it is impossible to separate the truth from the lie.

God did not die as Nietzsche prophesied, but dispersed in his different *idolatrous shells*: “history”, “reason”, “communism”, “superman”, “happiness”, “consumerism”, “success”, etc.

If you live in the realm of dreams, may the wishes of the richest and most powerful be pale shadows compared to your fantasies created in the forge of your inferiority complex.

Love jeopardies

From the love declaration to loved ones, we move on to the love declaration to life, and this revelation is like the *first yellow leaf* that announces autumn.

The drama of love is that it passes, but the tragedy is an unrequited love, and it does not pass.

The best is the enemy of the good. Indeed, the woman falls in love with the man when she knows him well and she stops loving him when she knows him even better.

It is easy to doubt the sincerity of someone who says: "I love you", but it is hard to question the honesty of someone who asks: "Do you love me?"

The main idea of masochism is not only the pain that the masochist gets from pleasure, but the postponement of pleasure, breaking the temporal link between desire and pleasure; create an uninterrupted process of desire that becomes the height of pleasure.

The most difficult thing to get rid of an unrequited love is not so much to get away from the loved one but to exile him from the mind or, what is better, “strangle his image”. How to make it disappear? If the unfortunate lover does not resort to suicide, he must trust in the healing forces of time, this antivirus of love fever.

The loss of hope in a reciprocated love causes indifference and apathy in the lover. There seems to be a transparent glass between him and the others, and although he can contemplate

them, it is as if he were looking at fish in an aquarium. He mechanically responds to external stimuli, reproducing gestures and words with difficulty; his emotions seemed to petrify, the only living feeling that he is capable of experiencing is the longing for the loved one. Tears are often intertwined in these dramatic experiences. According to Roland Barthes, "through his tears the lover produces a myth of pain and from that moment he settles into it: what are words? Tears will say more."

The lover sometimes "loses his temper", does things that are in contradiction with his intentions, even with his notion of good and evil, and at the same time understands that he could not act otherwise and that in his passion guided actions he concealed a conviction stronger than all the arguments of his reason.

Egoism main evil is that man absolutizes his own "I" and assigns an absolute meaning to it. And only in love does man put the meaning of his life outside the limits of his existence. Therefore, from the Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev point of view, "the meaning of love is the individuality justification and salvation through the sacrifice of egoism".

The lover may consider the tastes or judgments of his colleagues or friends trivial or boring; This is not the case when these same evaluations emanate from his loved one.

For some women, elegance is the ability to highlight what is attractive, and for others it is the art of hiding what is undesirable.

The woman gets nervous when she can't find the mirror, but she becomes even more bitter when she finds it and realizes that the makeup is not able to hide her age.

I have never forgotten that moment when I saw her for the first time: my throat went dry, my pulse began to beat feverishly, my body tingled. And don't think I didn't try to woo her; I will never forget the humiliation I felt at her mockery.

He thought of committing suicide because of an unrequited love, but he did not do it due to lack of daring. Years passed and he, finding the object of his mad passion, thanked his cowardice for having protected his life.

Some feminists attack machismo on all sides, while others behave according to the motto: *I am a woman and no masculine quality is foreign to me.*

It is impossible to love all women, but expressing admiration for the most attractive ones is useful to nurture the ideal of beauty.

Almost all women wear makeup, even the most beautiful ones. Does this mean they want to be devilishly beautiful?

Sometimes holding our gaze, a little longer than what the rules of decency allow us, is enough to turn our lives upside down forever.

Love is a temporary eclipse of reason that, according to Plato, turns the lover into a possessed being. Like a violent storm, it breaks into our world and disrupts the balanced course of our daily affairs. According to Neil Gaiman, "love takes hostages. It gets inside you. It eats you alive and leaves you crying in the dark, and a phrase like 'Maybe we should just be friends' becomes a glass sliver that goes straight to your heart." All that was sacred before pales and loses its value compared to the new divinity.

He who knows is loved can be better not only for those who love him, but also for himself. This was well expressed by Mikhail Prishvin: "That being that you love in me is, of course, better than me; I am someone else, but love me and I will try to be better than what I am".

"I will love you forever" is an illusion, but without it, it's impossible to be in love.

The law of reason enough is not able to fully explain the spell emanating from the loved one. Woe to him to whom God gave beauty but took away the charm.

Man and woman are different, but it is the woman who blames the man of taking advantage of this difference. And she is absolutely right, because not only the reproductive process, but the very human species ontogenetic development, much more than any other animal species, depends on the human female.

In women the desire to be loved appears before the desire to love and with men it happens the other way around. This, perhaps, explains the hasty marriages of both sexes.

A critical moment in the loving alliance is the "taming" of passion, the transition from the fervor of falling in love to a peaceful relationship, the transition from frenetic happiness to calm bliss. Those who do not take up the challenge of uniting the enjoyment of love with the calm of hearts, run the risk of not surviving the pitfalls of daily existence.

You cannot love the other if you do not respect him, but you can love him, then lose respect for him and, nevertheless, continue loving him, understanding that he is a beast.

The declaration of an ironic person to his loved one: "As banal as it may seem, I love you."

Be that as it may, most men prefer women, a wonder of nature, a lady, a miracle of artifice.

Paraphrase by Paul Valéry: when the groom is more attractive than the bride, it can be assumed that he has a *keen intuition*, and she has a *refined taste*.