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1



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A THROW OF THE DICE WILL NEVER ABOLISH CHANCE: BETWEEN EXISTENTIALISM AND TRAGEDY. AN AESTHETIC SUGGESTION IN 200 PHILOSOPHICAL APOSTILLES

Un tiro de dados jamás abolirá el azar: entre el existencialismo y la tragedia,
una propuesta estética en 200 apostillas filosóficas

3

Abstract: *This collection of apostilles explores the existential themes of modernity: freedom, knowledge, and the limitations of human existence. Drawing on the works of philosophers such as Schopenhauer, Sartre, and Hegel, the reflections engage with questions about the nature of desire, reason, and the search for meaning. The aphorisms provoke reflection on the fragility of human agency, the impossibility of true satisfaction, and the ever-present tension between the individual's will and the broader forces. The collection challenges the reader to confront the contradictions inherent in modern life and to find significance in a world defined by absence and uncertainty.*

Keywords: *Modernity; Desire; Freedom; Knowledge; Existencialism.*

Resumen: *Esta colección de sentencias aforísticas explora los temas existenciales de la modernidad, la libertad, el conocimiento y las limitaciones de la existencia humana. Basándose en las obras de filósofos como Schopenhauer, Sartre y Hegel, las reflexiones abordan cuestiones sobre la naturaleza del deseo, la razón y la búsqueda de sentido. Los aforismos invitan a reflexionar sobre la fragilidad de la agencia humana, la imposibilidad de una satisfacción verdadera y la eterna tensión entre la voluntad del individuo y las fuerzas más amplias del mundo. La colección desafía al lector a confrontar las contradicciones inherentes a la vida moderna y a encontrar significado en un mundo definido por la ausencia y la incertidumbre.*

Palabras clave: *modernidad, deseo, libertad, conocimiento, existencialismo.*

Introduction

Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard [i]

—Stéphane Mallarmé

This collection of aphorisms addresses the complex and often contradictory terrain of modern philosophy, from the tension between reason and desire to the role of human agency in a world where meaning constantly eludes us. Rooted in the ideas of philosophers such as Schopenhauer, Sartre, and Hegel, these brief reflections delve into the existential and metaphysical dilemmas faced by the modern individual. The aphorisms challenge the notion of an essential, immutable human nature,

confronting instead the fragility of existence, the limitations of knowledge, and the intricate dance between freedom and necessity. As the reader moves through this catalogue, the text invites an encounter with questions that resist fixity and continue to linger beyond the page.

On Modernity

- The world and its gods undergo an insurmountable fracture in modernity: abandonment and disenchantment, loss of ethical guidance. Is the Absolute no longer good?
- For the moderns, God is no longer an object of knowledge.
- The modern individual shapes his identity in defiance, believing that within this rebellion lies his true strength.
- For the moderns, man must be overcome.
- Evil is deeply rooted in modern literature; it is not sought, however. Evil is contingency, eventuality, accident.
- Modernity is the mouth of man's project: the posthuman and anti-human vision.
- For the moderns, submitting to moral universality is perverse. Universality masks the human condition and undoes freedom. It is either one or the other.
- To think of man as a free and autonomous being is the heart of modernity.
- Modernity constitutes an affirmation of the world and not of the beyond. Man is a thrown and fallen being-in-the-world.
- In modernity, the recognition of the event is an authentic human product which can never negate the event.

Of God, Reason and Truth

- If there is no evil, God is unnecessary. If God is just, man can sin.
- St. Augustine once said that if there were no sin, there would be no salvation.
- Truth is to the unveiling of being what epiphany is to revelation.
- Spinoza would say that God does not appear because he is *causa sui*—not as an uncaused cause, but as necessary existence itself.
- What defines man is reason. Man, a rational being?

- Reason only serves to make a plan effective. A plan that will unconditionally lead us to our own destruction.
- The crisis of reason produces a crisis of universality, of metanarratives.
- To carry out a plan is life itself. Reason operates within being-in-the-world.
- God's point of view is precisely where the finite becomes infinite: where there is no place for ends.

Of Ideas

5

- A self separated from the world is meaningless.
- While wills are particular, reason is general.
- Ideas are man's habitat; belief is his dwelling place.
- The idea is a perfect imperfection.
- The problems of experience are not solved by beliefs; it is there that ideas come to light.
- The idea arises with the crisis of belief.
- Consciousness is a painful crisis of ideas transmuted into beliefs.
- Ideas are beliefs critically lived.
- In the Platonic Idea, it is possible to think beyond the principle of reason.
- Allegory is the most sensitive manifestation of the Idea.
- Is the Idea pure thought, born untouched by the world?
- Schopenhauer: Plato filtered through Kant, stripped of God.
- The perfect form exists only in the mind while the imperfect world stumbles along in its shadow.
- We chase ideals that can never be grasped, yet in that pursuit we glimpse what might have been.

Of Schopenhauer

- The will has no object: it is in the void. Knowledge does so.
- From Schopenhauer onward, the thing-in-itself is inaccessible to knowledge.

- For Schopenhauer, life is never solved: the more needs I solve, the more new ones arise. The more I know something, the less I know about the rest.
- The more the will is fulfilled, the more it reveals its insatiable hunger.
- In Schopenhauer, we are bound by the very thing that drives us—desire's chain lengthens as we seek its fleeting satisfaction.
- Every answer born of knowledge only deepens the riddle of the unknown.
- The pursuit of happiness is a dance with shadows; the closer we get, the further it slips away.
- Desire feeds the illusion of progress, yet in its wake it leaves only a deeper emptiness.
- To know more is to be more aware of what remains unseen; knowledge is an ever-expanding abyss.
- Life has no solution: only the illusion of progress, as the wheel of need spins endlessly.

On Being

- Man is incapable of assuming his own being, that is his essence. That is why he wanders in Hegelian History.
- Being is in the future. Or in the past. The truth is: you call, and it is never found.
- The conjunction of essence and existence is God, or the human being.
- Thought is derived from existence. To exist is the power of thinking.
- Man cannot reject his own plan of life. Being exists, then it is. Reason is the in-itself of all living. To renounce it is to renounce the human.
- Life dissolves in thoughts. Hegel, against Kant, believed that it was impossible to know a priori.
- Thought is always posterior to History, that is to say, to life.
- Metaphysics reduces reality to mere reason.
- To try to see the world without the optics of the Idea is to divest ourselves of Hegelian idealism.
- Being, or inanimate nature, is the very negation of nothingness.
- The transcendent belongs to religion, while tragedy dwells in the immanent.

- The contingent suggests that which may not be: an affirmation of the possible versus the necessary.
- Heidegger's Being —and his later sympathizers— is only a being-for-death.

On Existentialism

- Humanity, Reason, and Spirit are metanarratives naturally rejected by any kind of Existentialism.
- Existence is prior to essence and contrary to Reason.
- Reason, considered timeless by Existentialism, is already powerless to solve the concrete.
- Existentialist philosophy affirms the concrete, not the abstract: what is at hand.
- In Existentialism, morality is collective; ethics is personal.
- Existentialist reason tries to comprehend life and its a priori grounds.
- Experience is conditioned by thought. Essence, never.
- Existentialism breaks with the enlightened project of continuous being. It is the same: there is no humanity sustaining the background of being.
- Existentialism defends autonomy against universality.
- In Existentialism, reason no longer serves as an excuse to avoid freedom.
- In Existentialism, freedom is a project, an idea; that is why it is realized in man through value systems.
- The morality of the existentialist is authenticity. The Kantian duty, compulsory.
- Truth, for Existentialism, is sincere, changeable, proper to immanent Being.
- The existentialist is not categorically bound; much less by a post-Enlightenment imperative.

On Sartre's Behalf

- In the face of Kantian morality, Sartre prefers a situationist ethics: I solve my problems from my circumstances, not from a universal value.
- Sartre continues Kierkegaard's thought against the Hegelian Spirit.
- For Sartre, man is possibility, contingency, chance. He is not a necessity.
- Hell is the other, how right you were, Jean-Paul Sartre!

- Man cannot recognize values without exercising his freedom.
- Sartre does not include death in the project of man. The for-itself is the freedom of the subject. Bad faith, being-for-others.
- For Sartre, together with the other, I am reified, an object for the subject.
- The subject cannot be grasped: here my being is not in me but in the other. That is infernal.
- Phenomenology, contrary to Existentialism, is the truncated, non-realist, non-idealist effort to turn to the things themselves, a great lie.
- Following Sartre, man is distinguished from the object because he is also the object of himself, in addition to being a subject.

Of Literature and the Romance Novel

- The novel unveils the romantic lie (of desire) as either desire or an autonomous entity.
- The novel opens to the reader the possibility of adventure. The reader and the characters do not know where they are going: they find themselves in an endless evil.
- Kierkegaard conceives life as a mortal illness that will lead us sooner or later to non-existence. For him, only through literature can one be consoled.
- The romantic novel admits exclusively a subjective will that, whether we like it or not, leads to tragedy.
- The novel is to be thought, not lived.
- Does modernity in the romantic novel occur as allegory?
- What happens in the romantic novel is never inexorable. What is not imperative is what might not be, and in that emptiness, we find its fascination.
- The characters in the romance novel are never false. The novel is an attempt to reveal reality itself.
- Literature is primitive to philosophy. Philosophy precedes tragedy. Religion plays with all of them.
- The character in literature envisions his own end, yet the meaning of life's conclusion is subjective; in the desertion of each soul, no absolutes exist.
- In the romantic novel, the character loves his destiny because he desires it.

- Nietzsche is the wind that pushes us to action; Kafka, the shadow that allows us to be. The former invites us to admit suffering, the latter whispers that in his embrace there is no escape, only acquiescence.
- For the common Romantic, without literature life would be less beautiful. For Nietzsche, only without music would life be a mistake.
- Goethe considers Romanticism to be a disease without a cure. For that, thank you.
- Desire can never—or will never—be satisfied and literature cannot put an end to that evil.

Of Don Quixote and Madness

- The poet (like Cervantes) is actually mad (like Quixote); in reality, madmen believe themselves to be poets.
- Quixote represents madness, while Cervantes alludes to reason.
- For Quixote, madness arises as the (deliberate) renunciation of reason.
- Cervantes' novel is perhaps one of the purest affirmations of the will.
- Quixote is an attempt to give meaning to the most insignificant.
- In the meditations of Quixote, the authentic is the properly heroic.
- The hero is more important than what is said about him.
- The hero's heroism consists in being himself. "Become what you are," Nietzsche would proclaim.
- Madness is the only clear-sighted view of a world that refuses to see itself.

On the Nature of Art

- Art does not imitate reality; it unveils it.
- The truest artworks are not reflections of the world but windows into it.
- Art exists not to answer questions but to deepen them.
- The artist does not invent beauty; he discloses it.
- Art does not (re)produce life—it reorganizes it into a new order.
- What cannot be expressed in words, art delivers in mutis.
- Art is the most fragile and the most enduring form of human thought.

- A work of art is an apostille without words.

On Beauty and Aesthetics

- Beauty in art is not perfection; it is resonance.
- What we call beautiful is often what reminds us of something beyond ourselves.
- True beauty does not demand admiration—it uncovers itself effortlessly.
- Aesthetic truth is not what pleases the eye but what shakes us to the core.
- Aesthetic experience is the moment when time transforms into acquiescence.
- The sublime in art is that which both terrifies and fascinates.
- The highest form of beauty is that which makes us forget we are looking at art.
- Art teaches us to see not what is but what could be.

On Art's Truth and Creativity

- Every great artist works with one hand guided by technique and the other by intuition.
- The true artist does not impose meaning; he allows it to emerge.
- Genius in art is not necessarily mastery but vision.
- The artist is not a creator but a demystifier of the unseen.
- The artist must first learn to listen before he can speak in his own voice.
- Creation is not an act of control but of surrender.
- To make art is to engage in a dialogue with the infinite.
- An artist's greatest challenge is not inspiration but the courage to follow it.

On Truth and Emotion in Art

- All art is a kind of philosophy; it asks questions in color, sound, and form.
- The greatest lie art can tell is that it has no meaning at all.
- Truth in art is not literal; it is experiential.
- The deeper the truth in a work of art, the less it can be translated.

- Art is not about representing the truth but about revealing what we have ignored for centuries: Spinoza's Substance.
- Every painting, poem, or symphony is an unfinished conversation with eternity.
- A great work of art is one that continues to reveal new truths over time.
- Art does not give answers; it helps us ask better questions.
- The most profound art does not tell us what to think but shows us how to feel.
- Artists search for truth, knowing they will never grasp it.
- The purpose of art is not to entertain but to awaken.
- The artist's job is to give form to those emotions that have no form.
- A painting is not made of color but of feeling.
- Art moves us by arousing awareness of a narrative within our own experience.
- A true work of art does not express the artist's emotions but stirs the viewer's.
- What we remember of a painting or a song is not its details but the way it made us feel.
- The greatest works of art do not describe emotions; they make us experience them.
- Art is the only logos that speaks directly to the heart without translation.

On Time in Art

- Art is the only way to touch eternity without leaving the present moment.
- A masterpiece is not something timeless; it is something that makes time irrelevant.
- The artist's greatest ambition is not to live forever but to create something that does.
- What we call immortality in art is simply the refusal to be forgotten.
- A great work of art does not age; it metamorphoses with each new spectator.
- Every masterpiece is a letter written to/from the unknown.
- To create art is to plant a seed in time, unsure of when it will bloom.
- Art is proof that something of us can survive beyond ourselves.

On the Role of the Audience

- A painting is only half-finished until it is seen.

- No two people ever see the same painting, hear the same song, or read the same poem. The greatest art invites participation; it does not impose exegesis.
- A viewer's interpretation of art is shaped not by the artist's intention but by their own experience.
- Every person carries a different world to the canvas, the stage, or the score.
- The best art does not tell us what to feel; it creates the space for sensing.
- No work of art is ever truly finished.
- Art does not demand understanding; it demands presence.

Of Philosophers and Art

- Plato feared poetry because he knew its (incommensurable) power.
- Aristotle saw art as imitation; modern artists see imitation as theft.
- Kant believed beauty was disinterested pleasure, yet no one looks at a masterpiece indifferently.
- Hegel thought art was a stage in the evolution of the Spirit; perhaps that is the only stage that matters.
- Schopenhauer saw art as redemption from the inherent suffering of being alive; great artists know it is also born from it.
- Heidegger believed art reveals truth; maybe it also reveals the truths we fear.
- Schopenhauer and Nietzsche thought art was an escape from the will; for creators, it is surrender to it.
- The greatest art contains both the Apollonian order and the Dionysian creativity.
- If Kierkegaard had been a painter he would have painted doubt.
- The philosophy of art is not about defining it but learning how to see.

Of Art and Society

- Art does not change the world; it changes how we see it.
- The artist is both the historian and the prophet of his age.
- Art is society's way of leaving footprints for the future.
- Every revolution in art is a rebellion against what came before.

- Censorship is the fear that art will reveal too much truth.
- A culture is known by the art it safeguards.
- Art flourishes in freedom and suffocates in control.
- The destruction of art is the destruction of memory.
- Where words fail, art articulates; where art fails, society is lost.
- Art is not luxury; it is necessity.
- Art is the closest we come to understanding the mystery of existence.
- To create art is to participate in something greater than oneself.
- What remains of a civilization is its art.
- Art is the universe contemplating itself through human hands.
- If the world had no art, it would have no soul.
- Art is the whisper of eternity in the idiosyncrasy of the present.
- One purpose of art is to remind us that we are alive.
- The greatest masterpiece (of all) is life itself.

Miscellaneous

- Historical thought since Hegel supposes the totality of History. It is a never-ending story.
- To do what one really wants is a violent exposure to solitude.
- Desiring is what distances us and sets us against the world: the will does not admit others.
- In Spinoza's Substance there is neither order nor disorder, just as in the world, the real has no absolute meaning.
- Happiness is the absolute affirmation of all things: Nietzsche's amor fati.
- Science is necessarily finite.
- Freedom is the ability to deny or affirm all impulse and passion.
- In space and time there is no uniformity of thought: both are subjective.
- Desire is a disease that art can alleviate but never cure.
- It would be necessary to imbue life with human will in the face of randomness devoid of will—where nothing remains.

Conclusion

A throw of the dice will never abolish chance... a statement that encapsulates the condition of modern thought with stark lucidity. What remains after this recognition is not resignation, but a heightened attunement of the fragility that underlies every attempt to understand the world. Philosophical inquiry, when pursued honestly, does not culminate in closure; it opens a space where questioning becomes an enduring practice rather than a problem to be solved. Meaning, knowledge, and freedom emerge here as experiences shaped by limits, by interruption, and by the constant realization of what escapes conceptual grasp. This collection unfolds within that space. Each epigram traces a fleeting gesture towards sense, never claiming totality, never aspiring to synthesis. Their value lies not in what they resolve but in what they unsettle. Read together, they invite a posture of attentiveness towards ambiguity, tension, and paradox—elements often excluded from systematic thought, yet indispensable to any genuine reflection on existence. Thinking advances through detours, pauses, and silences, learning to remain with questions that refuse domestication. Modern consciousness, stripped of metaphysical guarantees, discovers its rigor precisely in this endurance. The refusal of premature certainty becomes an ethical stance: a way of honoring the complexity of life without reducing it to formulas or doctrines. To acknowledge the persistence of forces beyond comprehension—whether named fate, will, or chance—places human agency within a wider and inherently unstable horizon. The dice are cast again, not in hope of mastery but in fidelity to the unresolved.

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Notes

[i] A throw of the dice will never abolish chance.