

Aphoristic Appendage to On Truth Telling

1-50

1.

Every breath is a salute to life.

2.

Life is one big exclamation with little in the way of explanation.

3.

Poverty goes featureless, even when recognized.

4.

**The big house you have will not halt the decay of your flesh;
maintaining it might hasten it, however.**

5.

Oftentimes, the only difference between the winner and the loser is the will of the former to go further.

6.

Life is the reward and punishment for having been born.

7.

Never was anything more furtive than wrong never tampered with.

8.

You don't blame a good plow horse for wearing out the traces.

9.

Disappointment hammers away at determination.

10.

Though a river does mighty work, it follows the path of least resistance.

11.

Womanhood – a great river running through the course of my life in which, though I've been permitted to splash about on occasion, I've been forbidden to bathe or slake my thirst.

12.

One chooses one's philosophy like one chooses a good pair of shoes – for comfort and fit.

13.

Few must there be who get what they want out of life and, very few, indeed, who get more.

14.

To be a good creator type is to create a type.

15.

Human greatness is human pride and human perversity that, despite everything that can be said against it, ends up having more said for it.

16.

The scholarly ideal is to be an excellent cartographer of other people's thoughts.

17.

What do we go to the theatre or cinema for if not to see what we normally don't see, that is, people undressing themselves, spiritually and psychologically speaking?

18.

Sometimes I feel like I go about in life like a box of flesh with eye slits.

19.

In politics, both hypocrisy and hyperbole are the order of the day.

20.

In war time, hypocrisy and hyperbole not only are the order of the day but raised to the status of virtues.

21.

If youth were all it's cracked up to be, one would surely loathe one's later years.

22.

If wisdom were all it's cracked up to be, one would surely loathe fools.

23.

The madman's talking to himself was the only thing that kept him sane.

24.

Professional philosophers no more want falsehood done away with than doctors illness or policemen crime.

25.

Reasoning about complicated matters in philosophy is always at fault because it always leaves out some complication.

26.

Politics has the same relation to truth that a hammer has to a nail driven into hard wood.

27.

We are all punished with a death for all the sins that weren't discovered.

28.

Terrorism is the witchcraft and black magic of the twenty-first century. It's seen everywhere even when it's not seen.

29.

To call somebody or something the worst in international affairs is always an excuse to do the worst.

30.

Old age: being in the wrong for having lived too long.

31.

Old folks' home: the place where they keep dead people alive.

32.

When all is said and done, it may very well be that the best truth is a good lie.

33.

There are always people willing to ride on or ride out a prejudice particularly when it has their best interests at heart.

34.

Anything can be objectified and therefore objected to.

35.

The miracle keeps repeating itself and so becomes mundane.

36.

Man and woman: the victim and victimizer of each other.

37.

So many deaths over a life should reconcile us to it.

38.

Living one's life at the best boils down to having a choice how to suffer.

39.

Much of what we now call evil was at one time done in the name of good. Much of what is now done in the name of good will one day be called evil.

40.

You have to live with things every single day until death takes all away.

41.

Better silence than a cheerful conventional greeting from the beloved who no longer loves you.

42.

Today's truth is tomorrow's prejudice.

43.

What starts off as a powerful argument ends up merely as the power of those who no longer feel a need or reason to argue.

44.

A conscientious writer is one who doesn't cheat or, if he

does, keeps it to a minimum.

45.

All who are aging are more or less experts at losing while living on.

46.

Injustice begins where justice is assumed to be absolutely known and, on this basis, justifying every means by which to establish its rule.

47.

There is both a collective intelligence and a collective stupidity that far surpass anything any individual is capable of.

48.

Even the simplest things are complicated beyond measure. A thought for those who would wish to uncomplicate everything.

49.

Nothing is more common than combining self-interest with a sense of moral superiority.

50.

The most common and yet most wrong-headed thing in the world is a prejudice which doesn't recognize itself as such.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

51-100

51.

Most people would prefer to judge and condemn the moral failings of others rather than to understand them. And this for the reason that they see any attempt to understand them as an attempt to excuse them. And this in turn for reasons which have less to do with honour or honesty on their part than with, on the one hand, a secret fear of what they themselves might be or might be construed as being and, on the other, an often barely repressed smugness and sense of superiority.

52.

Both the good and the gold are malleable metals, and both can be easily counterfeited.

53.

Everything past becomes in some sense contemporary.

54.

A: Why are old people so anxious to tell you their age?

B: Because they want to turn this negative into a positive.

55.

**What we truly love is what is closest to us, be it our beliefs,
our feelings, our hopes, our needs – or other people.**

56.

**Party politics is a lot of imperfect players pointing out in
imperfect ways the imperfections of their opponents.**

57.

Those who condemn hate so hatefully should look into (but they never do) their own hearts.

58.

Wine to vinegar, that's what life is, that's what love is, oh God!...

59.

In childhood we are immersed in the present. In youth we are drunk with it. In later years, we fill it with all our plans and projects. And in the final years, we stuff our past into it.

60.

In politics one inevitably adopts the policy of thinking the best about one's own side and the worst about the other.

61.

**Just as one man's freedom fighter is another man's terrorist,
so one man's journalist is another man's propagandist.**

62.

**Get back to yourself if you want to know the truth of things.
After all, there may be some small corner where you will find,
however hidden, a doubt, a division, a renegade element, truly
in line with what you think.**

63.

**Flight of fancy: When we, the whole of humanity, that is, find
some way of proceeding that goes beyond the one of routinely
thinking, morally, politically, and culturally speaking, the best
of ourselves and the worst of our enemies, there will be the
coming of some practise, principle, or passion into the world
almost divine as a human possibility. Needless to say, it will
have to do what has never been done before: subvert all forms
of the will to power. High or low, weak or strong, justified or**

not, all manifestations of this drive must become the opposite of our virtue. In this way, all strife will end if not all struggle – as the sun sets on our tumultuous spiritual life.

64.

The most common vice is counterfeiting virtue.

65.

To state the matter generally, war constitutes the best part of history but not the best part of our lives.

66.

People often think about a matter to come up with an opinion on it so that they then don't have to think about it.

67.

What is the game of truth? It is the game that, ironically enough, allows systematic error, deception, and falsehood to

play their part, so that this much-valued and many-sided activity, vast in its implications, full of plans, projects, programs, quests, discoveries, claims, schemes, and illusions, can go on indefinitely, putting into play all that matters more in the long run – interest, passion, adventure, inspiration, hope, belief, direction, commitment, etc. – than final answers.

68.

What is the game of truth? It is the play of truth in the finite – its appearance, presentation, verification, authorisation, and codification – while partaking of the infinite where none of these operations have a beginning or end.

69.

What is the game of truth? It is the game that forever conjures up the belief in imperishable truths even though these truths, insofar as they belong to this world, can only be written down on perishable material. In other words, if the “parchment” is destroyed, these truths are supposed to endure, be it in the mind of God, be it in some other form, be it in a universe that

is considered to be – although scientific theory now challenges this – eternal.

70.

Truth is idealized as something stationary or static whereas all the evidence, historical, empirical, or otherwise, shows it to be constantly in motion. However, certain elements, moving much more slowly, give the appearance of being fixed.

71.

When the claim to truth is also the claim to goodness, to the highest levels of ethics, morality, justice, wisdom, and even holiness, there is this paradoxical and often “horrifying” result: little tolerance for opposing claims.

72.

Capital punishment – to think that everyone has this hanging over their head!

73.

Being quick to condemn others is a sure sign of someone who would no sooner confess his sins in public – bare his soul to the world – than be condemned as he himself condemns.

Being quick to condemn others is a sure sign, in other words, of the hypocrite that, to some degree or other, exists in all of us.

74.

A thing not fully known – which at bottom is the nature of all things – is open to so many possible interpretations that, when someone says that such-and-such an interpretation is the correct one and, being the *only* correct one, therefore a fact, he is surely the hero of the day but the defeated champion of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow.

75.

Lead the most glorious life imaginable, leave a monument of whatever kind, and rest assured that someone will come

along one day and piss on it!

76.

Everybody says they want peace and not war. And yet everybody reads the newspaper or watches TV looking for what? Peace?

77.

Peace, among other things, can be boring. War, among other things, can be exciting. Need it be added that boredom and excitement have little to do with morality?

78.

When war offers a prize to a people, it is generally heralded. It will likely be deemed good not only by bringing certain advantages but also by adhering to some moral principle. Precisely here, however, is the fig leaf for much that would otherwise be called evil.

79.

Always the same. No matter how successful the life, the sad ending.

80.

One of the most offensive epithets there is, however common it may be, is not in the slightest way racist, sexist, ageist, elitist, or even speciesist. There is something remarkable about how this term, reductive not only with respect to the anatomy, is able to span the personal and the universal. However, if there is something less than universal about this word, some prejudice, in other words, it would have to be the rather bizarre one of negatively characterizing everything except the simplest forms of life.

81.

Personhood seems to be so important – what could be more important? – until one thinks of all the people who have lived and died since the beginning of time and now are completely

forgotten.

82.

Personhood is the gift of the moment, irrespective of the person who gives it, past or present, real or imagined.

83.

Suppose all thought, even the greatest, amounts to having a prejudice of one kind or another. The only remedy then, it seems, would be to have one prejudice countering another prejudice in a repeated, diverse, and wide-ranging way. But then (happy thought!) isn't this precisely what is going on in a world of free thought each and every day?

84.

An aphorism wants to be both understood and not understood: understood by the most sensitive ears; not understood by anything less.

85.

Just as a poem, an aphorism probably won't mean much unless it comes close to one's own thoughts and sensibilities, in which case it is like a piece of coal turning into a diamond.

86.

An aphorism, if it's to have the deepest view or widest outlook, must leave moralising to others.

87.

Few arguments are won in the long run by mocking, vilifying, or intimidating those with a different point of view but, in the short term, it must be very effective because it's done all the time.

88.

If one gets off to a bad start, one is usually not in the race. In certain respects, this is as true today as it was at any time.

However, in a number of parts of the world, both in the distant and not-so distant past, if one got off to a bad start in life, one was, in a manner of speaking, not even in the human race.

89.

Feelings! Feelings! To think that something so fleeting can, by shaking us to the core, draw the thinnest of lines between the most exuberant life and stone-cold death!

90.

Being humorous is the risk of either offending some or many or entertaining few or none at all. Sometimes these two risks can be taken without the slightest problem; other times it's a disaster.

91.

One should consider the possibility, however outrageous this may seem, that, morally speaking, we are all at the same level when all elements and circumstances not in our control are

factored in.

92.

Getting old is either a complete retreat from the field or a constant struggle to remain relevant.

93.

One sometimes gets the impression that life was made for the young and that everything else is a mere backdrop or secondary affair.

94.

Suppose there are an infinite number of universes just as there are an infinite number of stars in the heavens. What then? For one thing, it seems that, with a corresponding number of worlds, our poor little planet wouldn't be that unique. It wouldn't be the place that it more or less is now, that is, this orbiting spherical body so teeming with life that, in the face of such a miracle, it is often said: "Well, there may or there may

not be others like it.”

No, however unique a jewel it is in our universe, it would be but one of an infinite number of such jewels. It would be in a scheme that goes beyond any scheme, a universe that goes beyond any universe, a totality that goes beyond all theories treating the universe as if it were our backyard or even some open field.

95.

When the ancient Egyptians built tombs for their kings, did they know – did they have any feeling or suspicion apart from their belief in the afterlife (but this would have been sacrilegious!) – they were constructing time capsules?

96.

Perhaps, in a manner of speaking, the individual has always been a hyped-up affair. After all, under the aspect of eternity, what is really significant and worthy of worship is this matrix in which individuals can flower up over and over.

97.

What a strange thing! When we are with convivial company on a celestial night, the conversation with close ones seems more real than the stars!

98.

Words, words, words! We take them like air and water, without a thought, and yet they're absolutely essential to what we are!

99.

All political struggle has the characteristic of raising the rightness of its position (for, being war-like, it must fashion suitable weapons) to the status of a virtually untouchable ideal.

100.

If it is the case that, even in science, there can never be an account that is absolutely complete, that gives the full measure of all things, then how much more this must be the case, at least for those of us who are not “religious,” in everything that doesn’t quite qualify as science!

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

101-150

101.

What is generally considered to be true, and what is generally considered to be good, form complex fields of interests and beliefs that, however much they overlap, never quite coincide.

102.

It is more truthful to be negative than positive to the extent that, going beyond all valuations of a more or less positive nature, it is admitted that the negative is integral to them.

103.

Loose talk will always be with us as much as learned discourse insofar as the world forever falls short of being a monastery, a courtroom, a laboratory, and a classroom – of epic proportions.

104.

When all is said and done, one is valued according to the contribution one makes to the moment. At the same time, this contribution can vary greatly, extending even to the dead and their participation.

105.

The great prejudice and optical illusion that puts us at the center of things persists even in the face of now knowing we're but a speck in the universe. The saving grace seems to be that the singularity of ourselves as this speck, our special way of being as this speck, the myriad interpretations we have of ourselves as this speck – all this leaves little room for thinking we're just this speck and nothing else, that it's not possible we're in fact much more than this speck and, indeed, a speck that, if understood correctly, is at the center of things.

106.

Perhaps no human being, in his own lifetime, has been more exalted and deified than Ramses II. And yet we all know that, at a certain point in history, his monuments were buried in sand and his name almost forgotten.

107.

In politics, both hypocrisy and hyperbole are the order of the day. In war time, it goes even further: they are raised to the status of virtues.

108.

When making a difficult or dubious decision, perhaps one should ask, “Will I be able to live with this decision for the rest of my life?”

109.

There are things that even the wisest and most righteous

person in the world won't reveal about himself. For would this person, whoever this person might be, want everyone else to know how much he fell short of being wise and righteous?

110.

According to scientists, natural catastrophes on a global scale have occurred more than once and wiped out nearly all life on this planet. Such a prehistory, covering an immense span of time, suggests both a certain precariousness and a certain perdurability. While all life can be threatened at any time, the planet itself seems to have a good chance of surviving and even exploding with life after its being nearly decimated. Now given this state of affairs and the current threats of nuclear arms and global warming, wouldn't it be advisable to be more modest even in one's political thinking? Wouldn't it be the right thing, given that existential threats of a global nature will be with us for generations to come, to avoid making serious matters sound like a cosmic joke? In other words, instead of making *Save the Planet!* the rallying cry of future generations, wouldn't it be advisable to have something less presumptuous and more authentic? Something that doesn't overstate our capacity to control the

future and, and at the same time, doesn't try to mask our primarily egocentric concerns? Finally, something that would reach deep into our whole history and not simply speak idly about our modern-day role?

Help us to save us from ourselves, whatever powers may be, and forgive us our trespasses, especially those against all other living creatures!

111.

The human race is one long relay race. From generation to generation, the baton is passed, this business of continuing on with some things and starting anew with others. It is incessant and vigorous and, God only knows, in some ways mindless. It is the future as we see it, which is always limited in its revealing of itself, but sufficiently so nonetheless to fill us with hopes, dreams, and best wishes.

112.

Much of our lives is spent wishing for this or that to make us a bit happier or to get rid of some inconvenience, discomfort, or

heartache. Yet if we have a pain in our stomach that persists and persists, how much we would give up of this or that, even of what we formerly wished for, if only *this* would get rid of *that*!

113.

Do you want to create something like a large-scale human family? Do you want the whole human race to act in a much closer, more congenial, and caring way? Well, then, let each and everyone go out and sojourn with as many people as possible, in as many different lands as possible, and over as many years as possible. Let each and everyone sit down with these people in a very intimate setting, listen to all their stories both good and bad, and avoid any sort of quick or easy judgments. Let this action be carried out and, for sure, within a few years, all tribalism and nationalism will lose their justification, all racial barriers will break down, and all prejudices will be robbed of the ground in which they spring up. But if you sense, as you may very well do, a problem here, if you protest that such an idea is wholly impractical, well, then, quite frankly, you've put your finger on the reason why the human race has never been a family. Certainly, it's not

because the people of this world aren't capable of it. No, it's because the world, simply by being a world, forever imposes itself as *distance*.

114.

There are people full of hatred who view others as not being entitled to their innocence and, if things reach a fever pitch, not being entitled to go without punishment.

115.

What is a newspaper? It is many things but one thing it never fails to be is a gossip column willing to exalt a person one minute and execrate him the next.

116.

Youth is many glorious things, but it seldom is glorious wisdom.

117.

The advantage of slogans, simple arguments, and rallying cries is that they influence, motivate, and galvanize people widely and even from one generation to the next. The disadvantage is that they are never an attempt – and here is their great shortcoming – to do justice to the complexity of a situation. As a consequence, they are inevitably challenged over time (it may take more than a few generations) and subject to being discarded, modified, or replaced. At the very least, they grow weaker in their effect, often becoming little more than platitudes.

118.

Response to the world-hater: It seems to me you want a judgment against the world with as little justification as the act of faith in it you condemn.

119.

A: Most people don't have an original idea in their head.

B: But perhaps they live a better life than you do.

A: I have no way of contesting this point.

120.

Are you worried about being emasculated by the opposite sex, dear sirs? Well, time has been doing this for hundreds of thousands of years to those who grow too old.

121.

A: To give credit where credit is due, I'm entertained by the news, no matter how bad it is.

B: How can one speak of entertainment if the news is horrible?

A: By not paying attention to the moral objection implicit in your question which I don't think is aimed at the enjoyment per se, but rather at the admission of such enjoyment. In other words, the feeling, emotion, state of mind, or whatever you want to call it is probably what a lot of people, including yourself, experience. So, what you're truly objecting to is an admission that doesn't come with contrition, that doesn't register this enjoyment of bad news – even horrible news – as

a sort of secret sin.

B: Well, isn't that precisely what it is, no matter how many people you want to tar with the same brush?

A: I see you're excited and, since I haven't much time, I'll simply say that these matters touch on both psychology and theology. If you're in the psychology camp as I am, then the answer to your question is no. If you're in the theology camp as you seem to be, then the answer is yes.

B: Theology! Good heavens, what're you talking about?

A: Sin and going to heaven and being good and all that sort of thing. Anyway, I've told you where I stand. Now I've got to go.

122.

Taking a stand on current issues is rightly treated as a virtue that many should adopt but wrongly as a principle that all should follow.

123.

Do glorious summer days need cold dreary ones to be truly appreciated? There is this story that a young man named

Akhenaten went on a mysterious voyage with his father that took them over land and sea. Shortly after they came back to Egypt, his father died and Akhenaten, now the supreme ruler of Egypt, overthrew all the traditional gods and, to the consternation of many, made sun worship the state religion.

124.

Societies that attain a high level of moral development but, at the same time, wreak death and destruction in other parts of the world are, to say the least, setting themselves up for a fall.

125.

If well expressed and not threatening our convictions, a point of view different from our own can be, when duly considered, not only tolerable but pleasurable.

126.

An aphorism doesn't state with certainty what is hardly ever certain. This is an advantage to the extent that even the

most refined illusions have limited benefits.

127.

A: The word “terrorist” gets a lot of play these days.

B: Yes, similar to words in the past like blasphemer, witch, and unbeliever.

A: Are you suggesting that, like these words, it will eventually lose its effectiveness?

B: That, my friend, doesn’t require a crystal ball to predict.

128.

A: Love is the highest word for me! Love! Love! Love!

B: I hate to disagree with you, my friend, but love for me is not the highest word. It’s too nebulous, too over-used, too, I might even say, pretentious.

A: Well then, what for you is the highest word?

B: I’ve already said it – friend.

129.

When the last glimmer of sexual attraction is absent, when the face is wrinkled or faded, we perceive the loss in ourselves or in others, and we mourn.

130.

Let us not fool ourselves! When it comes to sheer aggression, there's still enough difference between men and women that, in a war where the battlefield remains the dominant theatre, it will hardly register as a dismissible factor.

131.

Blaming the world for, in whatever way imaginable, coming to an end is like blaming one's body for not holding up indefinitely.

132.

“And, lo, a great miracle befell the earth! All weapons were

renounced, all wealth distributed equally, all fear and hatred banished from the hearts of men! And all that pertains to health, happiness, and security was finally given to each and every one of the inhabitants of this planet and, behold, as a lesser miracle that all could well appreciate, all could even go so far as to celebrate given how different things had been in every part of the world and over a long period of time – as a lesser miracle, I say, there was this strange secondary effect of there being nothing left, in this now perfect world, to report on the evening news.”

133.

Motto of today's world: Do good but net a profit.

134.

You have the flavour of what you created in your mouth. It stays sweet for a while. But then the flavour is finally lost, the mouth is dry, and you must start over again.

135.

If the term “fake news” means not giving a balanced account of matters and events of mostly a political nature, then it’s merely the rechristening of a very old practise.

136.

It is not so difficult to determine where highest wisdom and greatest stupidity come together. It is the point at which the world would be ruined either by abandoning the search for the greatest good or by universally applying it.

137.

Viewing the world as infinitely complex is essentially at odds with viewing ourselves as its master controllers. Yet the second view is probably as necessary as the first from the standpoint that, by shuttling between these two views, we can avoid a totally pessimistic outlook as much as a totally foolish one.

138.

For some of us but by no means all, our relationship with friends and family, as dear as it is, is superseded by another: our relationship with the world.

139.

One way to get rid of a bad conscience is to look out over the world, see evil wherever one can find it, imagine it where it doesn't exist, exaggerate it where it does exist, and then say to oneself: "You see! I have no right to my guilty conscience!"

140.

So many people say this or that and so many people talk through their hat.

141.

Given that the world is forever changing, the good that views itself as definitive and final must inevitably find itself falling

short.

142.

There is nothing more common than people who, waving the banner of justice, find reason to perpetrate their own forms of injustice.

143.

The good, like gold, is a malleable metal. It can take many forms, lend itself to many uses, and even mix with base elements.

144.

Generally speaking, it's easy to feed a prejudice because there are so many facts to support it among all those that don't but can be conveniently ignored.

145.

Having a prejudice is an inescapable principle if having principles is itself a respectable version of the former.

146.

All minor things of the world, if taken together, are of such colossal importance that all great events, even if taken together, are dwarfed by them.

147.

To be invisible is not to be unimportant. It is simply to be invisible.

148.

What is the ego? – A soap bubble that extends itself to the limits of the universe.

149.

**What is life? – Pristine moments among a lot of other stuff
that isn't always agreeable or attractive.**

150.

What is death? – A cliché.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

151-200

151.

If life were one big happy moment, death would be impossible.

152.

The believer says to the unbeliever: “Believe!” In effect, he wants a miracle.

153.

Without mother love, everything would have been killed in the egg.

154.

Certain arguments are always able to convince certain

people. It's on this basis that vital sustenance is given to all social movements.

155.

Arguments are of course much more useful than aphorisms. But arguments tend to date, whereas aphorisms do not.

156.

The main objection to arguments: They say both too little and too much.

157

In James Joyce's novel *Ulysses*, what is remarkable is that, by portraying Leopold Bloom in an extremely thorough and profound way, even his most shameful thoughts and actions – sexual, masturbatory, scatological, voyeuristic, and so on – do not rob him of the dignity and respect that many of his other thoughts and actions rightly bestow on him.

158.

An unwritten but glaringly obvious rule of the news media when it comes to reporting on rival or enemy nations: Don't blur the picture. Keep it simple. It's us versus them. It's good versus evil.

159.

Universal peace will come when the curtain is drawn on life as we know it.

160.

In effect, most of the world enjoys peace. It is the reversal of this situation, however, that always haunts us. What we experience now, globally speaking, is more like a small number of distant earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

161.

If we were truly fair in our judgements, we wouldn't make

them until all pertinent elements had been weighed and measured. For a host of reasons, however, nothing is less common. This judgment itself, however, should be tempered with another, namely that, in practise, we have to live with faulty judgements, given that perfect ones would be deferred indefinitely.

162.

There is this old saying: Every man has his price. If anyone is so confident as to say, “This could never apply to me,” he is probably foolish enough, given the right circumstances, to end up illustrating it better than anyone as a more or less valid principle.

163.

Between inflicting one’s sadness and suffering on others and having others afflicted by them, between a more or less active principle and a more or less passive one, the difference is very little. Certainly, there is a moral distinction but whatever cruelty is involved is usually undetectable and

whatever indifference or lack of consideration can be observed or felt is more deserving of forgiveness than condemnation.

164.

In the area of morality, reducing things to a common denominator is a double-edged sword. While there is justice in including the voices of as many people as possible, there is also injustice when, in the form of public opinion, these voices conflate three separate stages of justice. Fortunately, there is the court system where only a certain number of voices are heard and where moving precipitately from accusation to conviction to punishment is firmly resisted.

165.

Who doesn't like to be flattered? Small wonder it ranges from one of the most common pleasures to one of the most common ways of taking advantage of others.

166.

It's hard to put winning friends and influencing people together with being honest to the point of hardness.

167.

What is it about human sexuality that drives it to the extremes? A short answer would be that it's implicated not only in the most sublime aspects of the human condition, but also in those that are the most voracious and duplicitous.

168.

Death isn't held up by a beautiful day; beautiful days aren't held up by death.

169.

Noxious gases overhead – our nightmare!

170.

The expression ‘this should not be’ has no doubt been a factor in stopping bad things from happening and will no doubt be the same in the future. Of course, this doesn’t rule out certain uses of it today from contradicting those of yesterday or, for that matter, certain uses of it tomorrow from contradicting those of today.

171.

Every generation more or less forgets the preceding ones. On this basis, it’s no uncommon thing to grow up thinking, “Yes, we are unique! This generation that I’m a happy member of!”

172.

Man, without society, would be like Robinson Crusoe without Friday, without his well-stocked island, without his own name and identity.

173

Eternity is in the moment and the moment in eternity.

174.

Science, as wonderful as it is, is always a simplification of the greatest wonder.

175.

A: When I think badly of life, I see it as a miasma of boring routine, frustrated desires, and anxiety.

B: You can think better if not well of all this if you consider one other possibility.

A: Which is?

B: Losing your good name and reputation. It's the hell on earth especially reserved for human beings.

176.

What separates a good reputation from a bad one? Often not

much more than an accusation.

177.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn said that the line between good and evil cuts across every human heart. How many people are willing to take this to heart?

178.

In any argument, even a philosophical one, winning the argument competes with getting to the truth of the matter.

179.

Civilization is a crowning achievement at one end of the spectrum and a cancerous threat at the other.

180.

Given our extremely long, primitive, and even animalistic pre-

history, it would be fair to characterize civilization as humanity's crowning achievement. For five thousand years, this magnificent cancer has grown and spread itself over the planet.

181.

When calls for punishment fill the air, it's largely the desire for revenge that's being expressed. Anything going by the name of justice here, whatever else might be said, camouflages an atavistic propensity that civilized behaviour shows no sign of leaving behind.

182.

Barring a few exceptions, we human beings leave the earth with a body and sometimes a mind almost unrecognizable from the ones we had. It's the epitaph forced on us which perhaps can only be erased by some all-encompassing "eulogy."

183.

The young are vital, irrepressible, full of zeal, and often idealistic to the point of risking their lives in the street and fighting without mercy.

184.

Party politics: The best thing that can be said about it is that it ultimately gets things done, is difficult to replace, is sometimes entertaining, and is probably the most effective way of exposing the divergences from the truth that both sides so earnestly occupy themselves with.

185.

Perhaps we underestimate the courage it takes to be old and sick and still smile.

186.

It's clear that not all of us are constituted to abide the old and

the sick. Their degenerated state warns us, frightens us, and repels us all at the same time.

187.

In Stoicism, suicide was considered to be, under certain conditions, not only acceptable but honourable. In Christianity, it was considered to be, for the longest time, both wrong and shameful. Now where do we stand?

188.

If civilization is humanity's crowning achievement, then perhaps human rights are the crowning achievement of civilization. But let's not forget that this historical development remains open-ended and precarious. Any self-congratulations will always be premature given the possibility of forces so capricious or titanic that this project can be put into jeopardy.

189.

It's fortunate that the moral faults and failings of others generate interest on the basis of what is largely hidden, that is, the non-moral or amoral aspects of our psyche. After all, take away our rampant curiosity, our cleverly disguised ego, our desire for revenge in things big and small and, without exaggeration, it would be a miracle if civilized proceedings could go on.

190.

Secret life: the constant measuring of one's self against others – the highs and lows.

191.

In the vast majority of situations, superficiality in the moral sphere goes hand-in-hand with an assumed superiority.

192.

In the areas where the greatest demands upon our time and attention are not vital, simplicity is always an easier and quicker sell than precision.

193.

Arguing to a conclusion is like running in a race in which the baton is the prize often not worth passing on.

194.

“We are such stuff as dreams are made on,” says Shakespeare, “and our little life is rounded with a sleep.” But can anyone live with this? No, because every moment contradicts it even though every century confirms it.

195.

Every generation takes pride in being so different from the

previous one. What an illusion! – but perhaps a necessary one.

196.

For two thousand years, Christianity, the religion that teaches love, mercy, charity, tolerance, and so on, has been caught up in war and conquest. This is proof positive that, when the need arises, people are willing to say almost anything, including that black is sometimes white and vice versa.

197.

“Yes, that man is a monster but, if you stretch your imagination, you’ll see him as once having been a child. If he’d had the germ of monstrosity in him then, you wouldn’t have known it. Now you, who are burning with the desire to eradicate him from the face of the earth, what about your emotions? Don’t you see what we all have in common and, no matter how different we are from him, what it might be named?”

198.

Insatiable Eros: The dream of getting into a succession of amorous adventures on summer evenings without end.

199.

**Wisdom would say, “Accept what one is and what one has.”
Imagination and Desire are all the contrary.**

200.

When we idealize, we become complicit in something hardly noticeable, something incremental, something that should be called cruelty. Perhaps it’s necessary to go down the road a bit, to experience the full effects of the ideal in operation before we can see that what falls short of or outside the ideal is quite often ignored, forgotten, or devalued and, at worst, persecuted.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

201-250

201.

The world has ended, and we didn't know what hit us. Was it a meteor? Was it an asteroid? Was it nuclear war? . . . Now the entire planet is dark and silent. Just as it was millions upon millions of years ago. But wait! There are still some remnants of life. Not much but enough to go on, enough to start over.

202.

Whether the pyramids or any such structures rise again or whether things go off in an entirely different direction is a mystery that we must abide. As star time, however, it will become the revelation that's already on its way and, indeed, virtually delivered.

203.

If it were possible to honour the individuality of every single person who has ever lived, a gargantuan project would unfold with as much richness and colour as the greatest novel.

204.

In whatever way death comes, there is the violence of the breath being cut off, the vital organs being shut down, and the final thoughts being scattered or thrown into darkness. The defunct person is put into a hole or scattered to the four winds, leaving only a virtual or remembered self to reassert his presence. If not for the latter, death's robber hand would carry away everything.

205.

When we're not immediately present to ourselves or to others, we're nothing more than virtual or remembered selves.

206.

Polemics! How much of our talking time is taken up with it! Especially in politics! Can anyone avoid it, or at least anyone discussing uncertain or controversial issues? Therefore, we're all consigned, at least at some time or other, to being less interested in getting to the truth of a matter than winning some argument.

207.

As far as common expressions go, the saying, "There's no fool like an old fool," seems doubly cruel.

208.

Argumentation that goes on in a more or less homogeneous group is peaceful enough. But when it comes to the same between radically different groups, it's more like taking up arms and, quite frankly, using them.

209.

What a multitude of micromovements it took to go from light, heat, dust, rock, water, and various gases to life as we now know it!

210.

Patience! So easy to preach and so easy to practise under the right conditions.

211.

In politics as in war, a more or less neutral outcome results in both sides declaring victory.

212.

Until we realize how important winning is to us, we will never grasp the extent to which the values of honesty and truthfulness can be put out of play.

213.

**What! You see a world full to cracking with different things
and you tell me eternity is empty!**

214.

**Yes, Planet Earth is nothing but a soap bubble in space. But
what a soap bubble!**

215.

**Rather than being proud of ourselves for what we've done on
this planet, we should be proud of the planet. After all, it's
done the best job.**

216.

**Without suffering, there would be no thinking. Without
thinking, there would be a lot less suffering.**

217.

A lot of things done nowadays that could be put down to bad taste or bad judgement are stigmatized. Diverse interests, be they in the name of greater justice or in the name of disseminating information, converge in a sort of calculated "socially approved" calumny. Whether the latter is aimed at the individual or at the collectivity, a moral high ground is assumed that, whatever its merits, cannot be fully realized without a power struggle. In short, any thought of doing away with victimization – with forcing some people to go down so that others may go up – is an illusion.

218.

A: If I had to reveal all aspects of my sexual life, I'd be deeply ashamed.

B: Why?

A: Simply because there are so many aspects. Do I have to go into it any further?

219.

In a certain sense, human sexuality is open to everything. In another sense, open sexuality is dynamite. Taken together, these two senses imply practices that society has sometimes tolerated in the shade and sometimes punished with utmost severity.

220.

Two things an aphorism has going for it is its desire neither to exaggerate nor to avoid what can be said. Or, more precisely, not to exaggerate what others exaggerate and not to avoid what others avoid.

221.

It's certain that an argument can change a person's way of thinking. It's also certain that, relative to the amount of time it takes to do this, other factors can play in and become increasingly more important.

222.

Trying to anchor right and wrong in something other than what people hold and believe at a particular time is an intellectual dead end.

223.

Moral relativism is considered by many to be immoral. This is the extent of their argument.

224.

We all know where moral absolutism leads – to the bonfire!

225.

Us against them! Us against them! So much entertainment for us and them! (Or else so much horror!)

226.

An aphorism has no agenda other than giving best expression to what is truly thought.

227.

It's possible to be politicized in many different ways. Rightly politicized insofar as there are many different causes that proceed from strong arguments and evident problems or injustices. Wrongly politicized insofar as, in this very same area, there often arises an uncommon level of self-assurance and contempt for anything not in line with presumably unassailable convictions.

228.

What is true and what is good are never perfectly in sync except in those belief systems that inevitably betray this ideal, this perfect union, as will to power.

229.

Being perfectly good, if such a thing can be imagined, would mean having to be totally in step with changing conditions and making adjustments at a computer-like rate with virtually superhuman foresight.

230.

Our thoughts and feelings are shaped so much by the day-to-day that it's impossible to know what direction they could take as various aspects of custom and culture.

231.

Besides the present, the only guide to the future is the past which is marked by periods of peace punctuated by war, by great technological developments interfused with all sorts of cooperative and competitive forces. Given this history, one may conjecture that a world-wide catastrophe is in the offing, possibly sending us back to an agrarian age.

232.

Yes, truth can speak to power but, of course, to present matters in this reduced or binary way is itself a departure from keeping truth separate from power or power separate from truth.

233.

Some people are in the “enviable” position of becoming increasingly famous after they’re no longer alive.

234.

It never fails to surprise us that some people incredibly famous and successful in their own lifetime are, within a few generations, not known to the general public.

235.

Who isn’t a sucker for a spectacle? It’s just that some are more seduced and taken in than others.

A: It's a parody, right?

B: A parody today but who knows about tomorrow?

A: Are you serious? I have a hard time believing that such a thing could happen.

B: Organized mass murder has been done before.

A: But across the whole world and with a whole sex being exterminated?

B: As I said, it would have to be done in a certain way. It has to be the catalyst for a new beginning.

A: But you make this horror sound comical with your idea of a sperm bank for this – what should I call it? – thousand-year Reich.

B: We can laugh at this, but the general idea is concrete steps must be taken for the preservation of the race.

A: And what about boys who come after? Are they to be massacred too?

B: Perhaps we are taking this all too seriously.

A: Let me read what you wrote here: "Here is a modest proposal which I think will fit in well with the mores of a not insignificant number of people nowadays. It's an idea I came

up with in light of what I think is not only necessary for the betterment of humankind, but for its very survival.

“What I’m referring to is nothing more and nothing less than the ritual sacrifice of all male human beings. Admittedly, this would be a colossal undertaking of which the logistics appear to be insurmountable. This proposal is therefore modest in the sense that I don’t know how it would be carried out. The details elude me, but the grand plan comes before my eyes in almost religious terms.

“In order to wipe the slate clean and start things afresh, in order to save the world from that half of humanity that most threatens it, there must be this sacrifice of half the human race which, however necessary, however well motivated, however humanely carried out, could still be viewed as a crime. But let me quickly add that this criminal act, however holy and blessed, is necessary for bringing into being a long process of expiation and atonement that will power the *mythos* and morality for the next thousand years.

“In other words, it’s only by having this “original sin” that salvation can be worked out as recompense, as redeeming factor, as the paradise on earth that all will be dedicated to bringing about. In explicitly religious terms, it would mean returning to the divine conditions before the Fall by,

paradoxically enough, bringing about the fall of Man.”

237.

This hungering for recognition that each and everyone of us has, is it ever satiated? Could it ever be?

238.

In the dominant religions of today there is this God that demands to be recognized. Imagine, an all-powerful being presumably upset by a lack of attention! If ever there was a projection of a human quality into the divine sphere, this must be it.

239.

Science is wonderful but, just as it's been for hundreds of thousands, if not millions of years, we still have to put up with growing old and dying. Not that this should change but .

. .

240.

Perhaps the stars talk to one another but if their talk exceeds ours as much as our talk exceeds the ticking of a clock or the beating of a metronome, what would we know about it?

241.

Each of us is married to the moment which, throughout life, is an indissoluble union. Past, present, and future are always packed into it – in miniature, so to speak – so that it takes in all relationships, be they dead and gone or alive and present. It even takes in the “reconciliation” or “reunion” we look for at the end. Whether the latter is practical or not, whether it can be realized in this world or not, it speaks of our ongoing desire to love and to be loved.

242.

Once one realizes how dependent most people’s thinking is on what others think in the group or society to which they belong, it becomes difficult to believe that their stances on

various matters are based on timeless principles.

243.

If everything was light and frivolous, childhood would be a condition persisting throughout life and not just one that can make a return at the end.

244.

One invents a word like “micro-aggression,” freely uses it against others, and never gives a thought that this itself is an illustration of the phenomenon in question.

245.

Having pessimistic thoughts about things in general is not the same as having them on a personal level. The first can usually be tolerated no matter how many years go by. The second rarely goes without a cutting short of one’s years in one way or another.

246.

Imagine if tomorrow all services were cut off and all stores closed down!

247.

The bounty of today's society is absolutely essential if barbarism is not to rear up and make a mockery of any pretensions that we might have of having got beyond it.

248.

For most of us, the day-to-day reality is much closer to peace and cooperation than it is to hostility and war. This is a fact celebrated in a multitude of ways, but which also relegates everything that might be contrary to this to the status of being merely a diversion, a sort of virtual reality.

249.

When somebody uses the expression, “We’re on the right side of history,” the intention is to indicate that the political aims and agenda of a certain party or movement are destined to triumph. Of course, this may be true but it’s still rather presumptuous to think one can know the history of the future unless it’s the near future and nothing more than this.

250.

No matter how famous and successful one gets, one is haunted by the feeling of being a fraud because, at some level or other, one senses the gap between public and private perception.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

251-300

251.

Take a look at *Animal Farm*. When the will to setting up an ideal society is wedded to the will to power, chances are the main leaders and organizers, however intelligent they may be or benevolent they seem, will turn out to be – and this is the least that can be said – so many wolves in sheep's clothing or, to state things closer to how they are in the novel, so many pigs who believe that all animals are equal but some more equal than others.

252.

Any group or class, no matter what their moral and political convictions, ends up being corrupted by power, the desire for gain being, like gravity, a universal principle.

253.

Now tell me about the *Brave New World* that's coming.

254.

From Newton to Einstein, gravity goes from being an attraction between bodies in space to being space that, along with time, is curved by bodies. In other words, it goes from being a mystery that most people understand to one that, physicists and mathematicians exempted, hardly anyone does.

255.

When one hears the language of war nowadays, one realizes that the same mentality exists today as existed five thousand years ago. Peoples and countries that pride themselves on their good graces are, in the face of some external threat, willing to unleash unmitigated horror.

256.

It would be fair to say that an empire is showing signs of decline when what it expects from itself as model society and what it expects from itself as imperial force grow disparate to the point of absurdity.

257.

For the birth of an aphorism, one is always counting on a state of mind that, at odd unaccountable moments, has the purity of a prism. Most of the time, it's quite the opposite: either cloudy and confused or else self-absorbed and fatuous.

258.

If every person were a model of good behaviour, the world would no doubt be far safer. The question is, however, how much do we desire safety over other things. Would a certain moral, political and cultural homogeneity, one resulting from everyone being right-thinking and right-acting, be tolerable? Could the world ever become a single community? How inhuman and despicable it seems to rule out such a possibility.

Rather, it seems that the best in all of us wants to keep this dream alive, even if it leads us in its own way to the apocalypse.

259.

You see what the problem is, all you intellectuals who claim to know and occupy the moral high ground? If you can't give priority to the hardship and death that your own country is responsible for, then all your other attempts at being authoritative on issues of right and wrong, however well argued they may be, are permanently open to being challenged and dismissed.

260.

Once one is a public figure, especially one who is greatly admired and respected, it becomes very difficult to talk on all issues with the same level of openness and honesty. The reason for this is, apart from the difficulty of admitting ignorance in some area or other, one has to deal with an idealized image of oneself that doesn't easily withstand

contrary effects.

261.

Here is man in all his glorious presumption when he invents theories about the beginning and end of stars and the universe, but no theory about the beginning and end of theories.

262.

You will find enough people who say they're for world peace, but few who'd be willing to give up some of their luxuries or take a significant drop in their standard of living for it.

263.

Walt Whitman! So wholly optimistic about humankind! So all-encompassing! So democratic! So confident about the future! So creative with the past! So in love with the present! So American!

264.

Love loves to flatter and to be flattered. Add to this all sorts of sensual pleasures and delights and one has that all-too fleeting thing called romantic love.

265.

When the consequences of going to war are far from certain, when the leaders don't really have the desire to get involved in a military confrontation, the frightening rhetoric that emanates from hostile nations is pure theatre. In most instances, its worst outbreaks will be forgotten. On the other hand, there is always the chance that, due to unexpected circumstances, what was supposed to remain mere posturing or positioning on the world stage suddenly transforms into an implacable commitment to setting it on fire.

266.

The ancient Egyptians must have had a burning desire to avoid old age as much as death. Not only did they die

relatively young, but they also believed they would have a rejuvenated body in the afterlife. Further, their hieroglyphics only portray young people. Imagine this in a civilization that went through thousand-year periods of being young, middle-aged, and old!

267.

What is comforting as an eternal prospect is the cyclical return and the straight line towards some new development or destination.

268.

Generally speaking, a person who is preoccupied with right and wrong is attracted to the political sphere. When the preoccupation is with truth and falsehood, however, it's best to avoid it.

269.

The ideal is not separate from the real but rather impressed

upon it, resisting it as well as being resisted by it: dynamic tension, creative impulse, intermittent competition and cooperation. Pathway to and palette of all emotions and sensibilities. Changing contour of a living landscape in every human head and heart.

270.

The best defence is a good offence. Could anything be more descriptive of the rivalry between political opponents?

271.

If everything that came from outside of us were taken into consideration, we could hardly be judged to be more responsible for the best that we do than the worst. But of course, this judgement itself isn't possible from a practical standpoint: moral, legal, political, social, cultural, or otherwise.

272.

Sex, the subject so out in the open and yet so confined and concealed! So common in practise (but certainly not so common as the talk or the thought of it) and yet so private and obscure! Gateway to pleasure and also to shame! Thorn in the side of many whose sexual life can't match their fantasies or who find it a trial or betrayal of their higher purpose. Creator of people and yet seldom thought for this alone! Sublime and messy departure from the ordinary! Short-lived hell or long-lived nuisance! Married bliss or pornographic recourse and relief!

273.

An aphorism shouldn't single out some people for blame while treating all others as innocent for at least one reason, which is that so much else, be it in speech or writing, is already devoted to this.

274.

Nothing is more certain than, if some individual, group, class, institution, organization, or alliance wields great power, it will have much more moral authority than it otherwise would. However, such power can never be so great as to prevent either a swift or slow erosion of this authority because morality itself can never be monopolised and can always become a counterpower.

275.

All human freedom is the product of an implacable fate whose rough way of measuring out things might be summed up as follows: All people are free, but some are freer than others.

276.

A despicable commonplace is the practise of, when reporting on some contentious issue, putting one side in the best possible light while the other in the worst.

277.

All arguments are suspect in relation to the degree in which they are partisan, polemical, and prone to giving top priority to winning, the “fairness” or “accuracy” principle being thereby undermined.

278.

When it comes to violence, to the worst that human beings are capable of, to what even takes in slight acts of aggression, there is a double standard so immense, so long-lasting, so entrenched, so robust, so resistant to any treatment at the level of practical morality that, when all is said and done, it would take a Second Coming to get rid of it.

279.

The moment of death is when the world stops circulating through us and we start circulating through it.

280.

Most of us think from day-to-day, week-to-week, month-to-month, and year-to-year. Should it be any surprise when, in five, ten, twenty, fifty, or a hundred years, something happens that hardly anyone has thought of or planned for?

281.

Being concerned with the true at the expense of the good could be viewed as being cold, uncaring, and even reprehensible. Being concerned with the good at the expense of the true, on the other hand, could be viewed as being flaccid, vulnerable, and wide open to corruption.

282.

Walt Whitman managed to maintain his optimism even in the face of the horrors of the American Civil War. Seemingly all wounds resulting from this conflagration, as well as all those resulting from earlier ones, would be spiritually healed as the Great New Democracy spread its influence everywhere and

made for the brotherhood of man. The positive, forward-looking, even “prophetic” attitude taken up by him throughout much of *Leaves of Grass* shows little sign of wanting or being able to extrapolate on the above-mentioned horrors to foresee the ones of the twentieth century. In this regard, his optimism was a product of his times. Though by no means innocent, the America of the mid and late nineteenth century still seemed to have all the ideals and energy in place to right all wrongs.

283.

A great nation in the throes of an identity crisis is the following: continuity versus discontinuity, reform versus revolution, the model society project versus the imperial one.

284.

A: Burning issues of the day are falling stars destined to go out very quickly.

B: Yes, in most cases that’s true but when one of them causes a conflagration, it’s more like all the rest were bad omens.

285.

What is proven humanly possible over and over is an ecstatic combination of moral certitude and extreme violence.

286.

Even if the issue of not being objective for various reasons is put aside, a free press is really not so free as it makes itself out to be. After all, being a business, it has to report a fair amount of news every day even when what's going on isn't much different from the day before.

287.

What's hardly ever admitted, being such a sensitive area, is that virtually everyone is looking for a way to be on top. But this lust for power and superiority, which is present even in this aphorism, can play itself out in a multitude of ways and seemingly keep company with the angels as well as the devils.

288.

While it's relatively easy to take up a radical or extreme position within some political movement, it's extremely difficult, on the other hand, to maintain an ambiguous or equivocal position when there's some highly charged moral consensus.

289.

What makes morality so different from most subjects is that, although highly complex, everyone thinks they understand it. The reason for this is the assumption that, due to so much having already been rejected or refined in it, a sort of historical endpoint has been reached. It is largely assumed, in other words, that the times we live in and the culture we have are so advanced that our knowledge of good and evil has reached a culminating point and, minus a few finishing touches, can't change or go beyond what it is.

290.

Cherry-picking is, according to the online dictionary, *Wikipedia*, the act of pointing to individual cases or data that seem to confirm a particular position, while ignoring a significant portion of related cases or data that may contradict that position. A good deal of the news we receive every day fits this definition perfectly.

291.

Would it really be possible to live without disliking or hating anything? Yes, but only if every single moment of our life was filled with the opposite. But of course, this itself isn't possible (for even children have their ups and downs), so we end up having to be content with a sort of intermediate state. For many of the non-bliss-filled moments of our life, in other words, we rather like our dislike of things and even enjoy our hatred of them.

292.

There are a number of people nowadays who talk about religion as if it were the worst thing that had ever happened to the world. This is a huge subject of course that allows for many paths of investigation. However, there is one thing that strikes the imagination of at least some of us not so quick to condemn age-old practises. Mindful of what can never be dismissed as a possibility, namely, an apocalyptic event, we wonder how many of these scoffers, if they were to see the end coming not only for themselves but for their loved ones and all they hold dear, wouldn't sink to their knees in a second and pray for some act of salvation well beyond reason or scientific explanation.

293.

Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself* seems to be his response to the question: How can I justify myself and everything else at the highest possible level? With such an immense project in sight, it seems that he casts all spiritual or imaginative restraint to the wind to come up with a poetic vision exalting himself and everything else ad infinitum and without

remainder.

294.

Just as we have to wear a public mask on a multitude of occasions, so we have to remove it, or have it removed at least once in a while and in whatever way possible. After all, it does get dirty, not to mention sticky, underneath it.

295.

If we listen to the talk or read the books of people who communicate at a high level and we appreciate and understand them, does not our mind become in some sense the same as theirs?

296.

A: I had the thought the other day that people in olden times must have been better-looking on average than they are today because they died younger.

B: What a thing to say!

A: I say it not with respect to wanting any change of policy in this area, but only in light of the common belief that everything we have today is so much better than it was yesterday.

B: I don't know what to say.

A: Well, it was just a thought....

297.

It's seldom admitted that, while morality is undoubtedly caught up in history as specific foundational moments and avenues of progress and development, it's also implicated in radically and suddenly changing circumstances. It's not so predictable as is commonly assumed, in other words, and even contains a powerful X factor.

298.

If only one could wake up every morning and, rain or shine, think, "Oh, this is like being on vacation! I wonder what we'll do today!"

299.

Of course, it's an illusion but when you're young, it often seems you can't go wrong.

300.

A: How many injustices have you committed?

B: Too many to count.

A: Big ones or small ones?

B: Mostly small ones.

A: To friends, family, or strangers?

B: To all.

A: Do you deserve to live?

B: I've already been sentenced to death – just like you.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

301-350

301.

In the Western World, the policy of being deeply humanist on the domestic front and rather hawkish or militaristic on the foreign, although by no means a new phenomenon, seems to be reaching its apogee. The question seems to be: Can such a state of affairs go on for very long if, as to be expected, it generates increasing tension – moral, political, and cultural – between the two sides of this policy?

The answer seems to be that one or the other side must collapse, resulting in either a militarily oriented takeover of the civil part of society or a humanistic takeover of the military side. In the latter case, however, a problem still emerges in that institutions set up for the defence of society, if they ultimately renounce war, might render this society vulnerable to another type of takeover, namely, one that comes from the outside. In the case of a very powerful society, fearful of no enemies, perhaps this risk could be taken. However, it would indeed be an astounding feat for a

number of reasons, not least among these being that this great society could never be certain it would keep its favoured position among less powerful but unfriendly nations.

302.

The most comprehensive thought is no doubt the most unwieldy and most unwelcome. It throws up and throws out all oppositions to the vanishing point.

303.

At a certain point in the human cycle, things turn around: daughters criticize mothers, sons criticize fathers – from generation to generation. Are the children who become grown-up sons and daughters generally fair in their criticism? Are the sons and daughters who become fathers and mothers any different from the fathers and mothers they themselves criticized? The answer to both these questions is yes and no. One thing is certain: that each and every one of them, from generation to generation, receives a certain amount of abuse due to one debilitating feature: they can never be perfect.

304.

The Great Pyramids: A magnificent monument to anonymity on a massive scale – from the ground up, from the top down, from inside to outside, from below ground to above ground. It seems that the designers and builders wanted to efface themselves. Could it be that they were not interested in a collective masterpiece but only a divine project? Could it be that they wanted to leave no trace of themselves but only of the gods who had built them or transplanted them to earth as a few choice stars?

Could it be that a belief in an extra-terrestrial world has never been as intense, as all-pervasive, as “democratic” as it was then? Perhaps every partaker of this original experience was promised that their anonymity would be more than compensated by an everlasting recognition in the life to come.

305.

It is perhaps in our relationship to animals that we first developed a moral conscience. After all, it must have become increasingly evident that our extraordinary power over them – over these essentially innocent creatures that gave us all we

needed and wanted – caused enormous suffering that had to be atoned for in some way.

306.

Besides the pharaohs, there was a powerful priesthood in ancient Egypt. Today there are some who view Egyptologists as being more or less the same: scientists who, no less devoted to their professional well-being than to the pursuit of knowledge, presume to have answered a number of fundamental questions in their field. On the other hand, the Egyptologists look down on their critics and those who offer alternative answers as being a ragtag group engaged in pseudo-science. It's certain that both sides are right in their own way, which leaves only time to determine who is right and who is wrong on any particular issue.

307.

The danger of becoming a public figure is that one can end up speaking less and less authentically on more and more issues.

308.

Excitement, headiness, the spirit of solidarity, the conviction that one is fighting for the just cause, the wholesale belief that some outrage has been committed and needs to be addressed – all these are the main drivers of the radicalization of youthful energies and the corresponding idealistic or quasi-idealistic outlook.

309.

An aphorism is an act of comprehending as far as possible while not losing sight of one's basic ignorance.

310.

Both commending and condemning without restraint usually have little to do with extending understanding and a lot to do with a *limited* understanding.

311.

Argumentation is part of pushing back the frontiers of knowledge and understanding. At the same time, it can only do so by running to excess, by claiming too much, by building its tower too high. As a consequence, it is forever requiring inspection, repair, renovation, and, indeed, when not collapsing on its own, demolition.

312.

Selling illusions! What a traffic there has been in this from time immemorial!

313.

The latest argument presented on a matter has a great advantage over all previous ones because it can rather convincingly pose as the final one.

314.

If subjects of debate were large pots and arguments handles, the first would be covered with the second in all shapes and sizes.

315.

With all its tendencies and proclivities, sex is a monster. If anyone doubts this, let them explain why it's still an issue after thousands of years while, for example, bowel movements hardly get any attention.

316.

A: When I look up at the cold stars, I receive this cheering message: "Take heart! It's not the end of the world if the world comes to an end. After all, there are trillions of others. It's just that you can't see them."

B: Cold comfort that is for the billions of people on this planet!

A: I know what you're saying. It pertains to our concern for our

own personal death. But this is precisely what each of us has to deal with. I don't say it's the only way. I only say it's my way.

317.

Isn't it something of a miracle that a person from past ages can speak to us, and, speaking almost like our contemporary, inform us about what it was like to live and think in his day?

318.

People can say all they want against this or that. But when it comes right down to it, the world would be a lot poorer – indeed, would be no world at all – without all these *this's* and *that's*.

319.

Note: Leo Tolstoy was a ferocious critic of war. He believed that it should be eradicated from the face of the Earth. But when it came to writing his greatest novel, he didn't simply

call it *Peace*. No, he called it *War and Peace*.

320.

An institution can only work on the basis of systematic thought. Herein lies the tendency or prejudice, if you will, to consider it the *highest* form of thought.

321.

**And they tell us that hurricanes and volcanoes are necessary!
(This is the “beyond good and evil” of the scientists.)**

322.

With the stupendous technological advances in the art of war, conflict between countries increasingly takes on the look of a collective death wish.

323.

Yes, it's fine to say that war has become obsolete on account of mutually assured destruction. But who will be the first to lay down their arms? Who will be the first to destroy them? Who will trust their neighbour enough to do that? For when it comes to countries, the neighbour is only as trustworthy as the person or people who happen to be in power.

324.

A: I must confess that, when I go to a large grocery store and look around, I don't view all the people there – people of different ages, shapes, and sizes – as Walt Whitman seems to have viewed his fellow man.

B: Walt Whitman?

A: The great nineteenth century American poet who exalted people despite their differences and despite their imperfections. In fact, I would go so far as to say that he likened their imperfections to perfections.

B: The only way I could do that would be in a drug-induced state.

A: Yes, but the trouble with being on drugs is it can go both

ways.

325.

All countries distrust one another but, as it stands today, with good reason. All these same countries are trying not only to get their slice of the pie, but the biggest slice possible.

326.

We look at politicians nowadays – powerful, ambitious people with all their imperfections on display. It can be a bit discouraging. But to give credit where credit is due, they do get a job done.

327.

If all world leaders were of the stamp of Marcus Aurelius, perhaps one could say (but nothing is certain): “The world is in good hands. The philosopher-kings rule.”

328.

With systematic thought, we have an engine that runs institutions and society most efficiently but, under certain circumstances, can also run them into the ground.

329.

What! Blame a people? A country? A religion? A whole historical period? You can't get away with that! You might as well blame the whole human race – including yourself!

330.

If the historical development of inter-tribal and international relations were measured as technological development, our present age could be determined as taking the first steps towards the use of bronze or iron.

331.

Where does academic, argumentative, or systematic thought

often fall down or short? In the area of capturing some insight or idea that falls outside its precincts or prescribed areas of investigation.

How does it redeem itself? By accepting what it initially rejects. A certain passage of time, a certain professional realignment or readjustment, and a certain realization about how wrong it was – all these are necessary before justice is done.

332.

A: Look at the intestines and their operation! Don't they provide evidence of our blind humble worm-like origins?

B: So what? We already know about evolution.

A: I was trying to come up with a vivid image of it. It came to me while I was on the crapper.

B: Yes, but do you really have to tell us about it?

A: You're right. The origin of my idea and the origin of all higher life are the same – an unpleasant truth.

333.

It's not that armchair critics aren't necessary. It's just that they often give the impression that, if they were in charge, the problems they speak of would instantly disappear.

334.

One thing that Einstein admitted but is not generally recognized (for there are many who think knowledge is merely observation and calculation) is the immense role that the imagination plays in giving birth to scientific theories.

335.

Perhaps more than ever before, commerce defines our culture. As much as this might not be the best way to go, it's difficult to have a clear idea of some other path. A radical change of attitude, character, and habits can no more be ruled out, however, than a radical change of environment. But the latter might come at such a high price that, like a huge debt that can never be paid off, it doesn't bear thinking about.

336.

Yes, knowledge is wonderful but suppose everything is infinitely complex. Then it's merely our way of comprehending as well as possible a vast array of phenomena.

337.

If knowledge weren't in some sense over-simplification, it would be like an encyclopedia with more and more articles never requiring updating.

338.

Even science is always simplifying, but in such a complex way that it often seems to be doing the opposite.

339.

At every moment in history, there must have been at least a

few people excited about being on the cutting edge of something.

340.

What does Nazi Germany show us? That a whole mass of people can be led by the nose if those in power are able to intoxicate a sizable minority, sedate a majority, and, whenever or wherever they choose, intimidate, frighten, and terrorize.

341.

If we could eliminate stupidity, we would do it very selectively. After all, some of it is entertaining, some creates employment for the less stupid, some offers us that extremely popular pastime of criticizing others, and, finally, we have to admit, some is in ourselves.

342.

There is no greater stupidity than that which, playing itself

out to be smart, proves to be disastrous.

344.

How much of human affairs and industry, when we view them for the first time, without the cold, critical, calculating, judgmental, and sometimes contemptuous eye of experience, is like nature in the raw, a delight to behold and nothing more!

344.

It's almost comical! All these countries that claim to be securing the peace while armed to the teeth and within a hair's breadth of letting everything go at each other!

345.

Clever person, beware your ability to make accurate predictions! For it may happen that you start making predictions that you would like to come true as if they *must* come true!

346.

A: A strong woman beating a weak man, that's not a problem to accept. But a strong woman beating a strong man, well, that's something that can happen of course, but not without raising some questions.

B: I won't argue with you on this. I'll just say it might fit the present situation. But what about the future? Couldn't everything be realigned?

A: Of course everything could be realigned. Everything could be destroyed too. The point being it's impossible to know all the ramifications of this or anything else.

B: But you seem to be taking a pessimistic view of the matter.

A: How can I do otherwise without throwing away my own proper identity?

347.

An argument is all about consistency and control. An aphorism is all about catching some idea on the fly and, if judged good, giving it the best possible expression.

348.

If we could view every good as a gift, and not as something owed or deserved, then the bad wouldn't be eliminated but at least it wouldn't weigh as heavily on us as it normally does.

349.

One thing that's hard to wrap one's head around no matter how much one tries is that nature is both beautiful and brutal – in almost every part!

350.

Most often the brutality in nature is very subtle and discreet. It doesn't seize our senses as does the apparent harmony.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

351-400

351.

There are some books that are talked about more than they are read. Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* is one of them, James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* is another. Now suppose these books were anonymously published. Would they have attracted so much attention? Would scholars have spent countless hours poring over them? Would the one be considered an important historical moment and the other a literary masterpiece? Or, if no connection could be drawn between them and the authors, would the first be considered an autobiographical monstrosity and the second a literary one? In short, can marketing take many different forms and, as one of them, delineate a powerful or illustrious context that makes all the difference between valuing and not valuing a work?

352.

Everyone is stalked by death but when you get old, you feel it breathing down your neck.

353.

It may do well to keep in mind that many contemporary issues would easily be erased by earth-shaking events.

354.

When one country starts talking about the atrocities committed by some other country to which it is hostile, it's often the first step towards justifying the same.

355.

As truth telling, an argument is an aphorism that moves outside its comfort zone and into, one might say, a combat zone.

356.

The ego is an exceptional awareness unashamedly exaggerating itself.

357.

Distractions! Distractions! When aren't they needed, be they innocuous or otherwise, to lighten the daily load or spice up the all-too-familiar? Only childhood, youthful exuberance, love, and drunkenness seem to nullify this need, periods of our lives or states of mind so caught up in one big distraction that no others are required.

358.

A: It's part of our culture to prop up the dying, to keep them going as long as possible. But at what cost to the happiness, well-being, and perhaps even the dignity and sincerity of all concerned? I'm referring to what we often have to say to each other at such times that's not particularly true to our feelings.

B: What's the alternative?

A: A culture in which someone dies with almost everyone in a festive mood. As if the stricken person were going off for a miraculous cure. As if it were such a happy moment that invitations should be sent out. Oh, I know it sounds crazy! Death and dying aren't really beautiful! Despite all the efforts to plaster or paint over the ugliness, we're still left with the corpse or something on its way to being one!

B: This is brutal, insensitive talk! Besides, it contradicts what you were saying about making the dying process attractive.

A: I said things the way I did so as not to pretend that revulsion isn't at the heart of at least some of our reactions to death and dying. As for the rest, it would take a complete overhaul of our collective imagination to make this process attractive and, possibly with humour, revulsion free.

359.

Yes, anyone can get whacked but, at least when you're young, you don't have this as one of your daily thoughts unless you're in a combat zone.

360.

Absolute transparency would dictate admitting that most of our daily whimsical, non-practical thoughts are, apart from the few real insights and good ideas we have, repetitive rubbish.

361.

Most people don't stop to think that opinions are based not only on knowledge but on lack of knowledge and that, if one had complete knowledge (which is of course impossible), one would have no opinions.

362.

What we call memory is only the conscious part of something vastly greater that's thousands if not millions of years old.

363.

Anyone who harshly judges the past on the basis of the

values of the present shows signs of something they obviously don't consider to be a vice, namely, a massive superiority complex.

364.

There are many strange contradictions. One is fighting for peace. Another is acting high and mighty while promoting equality.

365.

Is the aphorism a line of thought without the courage to become an argument? Yes, to the extent that getting into battles and taking risks is courageous. No, to the extent that, by being a lone voice and not drawing support from a like-minded community, it is courage simply of a different order.

366.

An argument is always prone to overstating the case it is making, that is, to exaggerating, because it can often do so

without being called out.

367.

Stereotypes are often offensive and meant to do harm but, by the same token, treating them as outrageous falsehoods is, in the name of combating them, the will to untruthfulness forged by the will to win, or to win over them, at all costs.

368.

The world is full of both beauty and horror, and sometimes it's not so easy to say where one ends and the other begins.

369.

Make no mistake. Since earliest times, the vastly greater part of human activity has been cooperation. It's just that the opposite belongs to the category of relatively short-term events and developments that have left the deepest impress on our collective psyche.

370.

Yes, the binary way of thinking – the “yes or no” or “true or false” way of construing or constituting reality – is dominant in science. But will anyone claim that discussing current events or the politics of the day is scientific? Why then is there this collective will to treat public matters, even those of a controversial nature, as if their structure and movement were as accessible to the mind as chemical or physical events? What generates this rush to find solid ground that, in the flux of things, can only prove illusory? What if not the heat of the moment, the lack of concern for long-term findings, the “unscientific” approach to this flux, and the multitude of desires and interests that comprise it?

371.

And are you surprised that many historical events are shrouded in mystery? Why, think of the events today. Are they so clear?

372.

Every argument, no matter what it is, always leaves out something. That's why there's always room for a counter-argument *ad infinitum*.

373.

If one hungers for clarity on an issue – and most people do – then one has no choice: one must be a partisan.

374.

Why are absolute truths such a hot commodity? Because all who believe in them can claim, implicitly or otherwise, that others should believe in them and, if they don't, they must be either ignorant or ill-willed.

375.

Certain high-profile intellectuals of today play the same role as the high priests of yesterday.

376.

Coming off the weakness of childhood and the still-weakness of adolescence is the strength of young adulthood that, as if to make up for its humble origins, is certainly not shy about showing itself off.

377.

Think of it! It's virtually impossible to go around in public, at least on a regular basis, completely nude. However, this is not primarily because of strict laws but rather because of a powerful taboo whose import seems to be that, if one breaks it, one is taking the most radical step any human being can take, that is, rejecting one's identity as a human being and returning to one's identity as an animal.

378.

The world is like an ocean floor full of the most amazing diversity. However, the optics of the moment can mislead us into thinking that certain exotic plants and animals are far

more populous than they actually are.

379.

The notion of good versus evil is a royal falsehood because, while being absolutely necessary in human commerce and communication (almost everyone has to buy into it), it's a gross misrepresentation of these very same things. In short, all is much more confused and complicated but dynamically related, every person, every group, every organization being a receptor of both the most noble and ignoble impulses.

380.

There are people who can do bad things without suffering from a bad conscience and there are people who cannot. However, it's not assured that the second group is better or better off than the first for, if they don't come to grips with their situation, they can be every bit as dangerous.

381.

The most common way to be not wholly truthful – even downright untruthful – is to be highly selective in what one speaks truthfully (aka the art of the newspaper).

382.

Morality in political combat is a weapon resorted to and used without scruple.

383.

Every night the mind goes on holiday for several hours and the body tastes death on the other side of all worry and pain.

384.

It's quite amazing that the mind can take in the whole of everything almost without remainder and yet be so far from knowing the details of things in countless different areas.

385.

So much in philosophy is an idealization of the human condition with the emphasis on the Good. So much in the daily news, however, gives the impression of constant wrong-doing and systemic injustices. Indeed, the distance between these two is so great that it appears both are extreme or at fault and that between them is the happy hunting ground where they coexist and, perhaps to some extent, feed off each other.

386.

Of all the sayings handed down to us from the past, perhaps none have been more honoured by men's words and less honoured by men's deeds than the following: "Judge not lest ye be judged" and "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone."

387.

A: Shakespeare said: "But to the waist do the gods inherit; beneath is all the fiends'."

B: That's the way I feel – even on my best days.

388.

It's ridiculous to think there will be universal peace or justice as long as there are people who can look upon others as their enemy. For even if they do so in the name of good, there will always be the temptation to do bad by arguing that the end justifies the means.

389.

How many of us are guilty of gorging on the latest news and then, for some reason or other, complaining that it gives us indigestion?

390.

The good-evil dichotomy is the axis upon which action is taken drastically and irrevocably.

391.

Whoever feels morally superior to others – and perhaps that

means all of us – let him imagine all he would do or wouldn't do if he feared no repercussions.

392.

**Without the element of fear, there would be no morality.
However, the whole game demands pretending the contrary.**

393.

**Staying alive each and every day depends on a lot of brains
besides our own.**

394.

**The pain that comes from making a stupid mistake,
especially in front of others, is like that coming from a hard
blow to the body.**

395.

Making a stupid mistake is often like walking onto swampy ground and getting caught before one knows it.

396.

Thinking about one's stupidity is like a gnawing cancer until one ends up forgiving one's self for it or forgetting that it ever happened.

397.

When perfect justice is done, all facts are taken into consideration. The courtroom best approximates this ideal. For the most part, what occurs outside the courtroom – in the news, public discussion, films, and even in many books and documentaries – falls short of this.

398.

A: Yesterday he was right beside me. Today he's in his grave.

B: This distance between the "right beside me" and the "in his grave" – we live with the thought of its being so great and we're constantly reminded of its being so little.

A: You're always speaking about death. Why should young ears or even not so young ears care about this?

B: I speak about death for myself and to myself.

A: And?

B: Let those with young or old ears listen in on the conversation if they wish.

399.

Trying to persuade and trying to be objective amount to a conflict of interests that can only be minimized.

400.

The power of persuasion goes hand-in-hand with perpetuating the belief that one is being completely informed about a matter.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

401-450

401.

The pedagogical and the propagandistic are surely combined in the political arena. Much of what goes down there as thought is more like hitting on the same nail. However, it would be wrong to think this constant repetition has no design or purpose. Rather, it is meant to teach a certain way of thinking to a specific audience or, better, teach the language of this way of thinking, that is, all its idioms, arguments, and so on, so that one ends up with something that – surprise! – barely requires thinking.

402.

What is science? Essentially a body of interlocking and non-interlocking ideas based on and elevated by a rigorous, massive, and ongoing attempt to understand the nature of things. Or, to say it with less formality and a bit facetiously,

science is glorified opinion.

403.

Don't place too much faith in the public. The people who show up to see a prince crowned will also show up to see him beheaded.

404.

Human beings are so exceedingly social that they have imagined obligations, appointments, and even retirement plans after death.

405.

We are thrown into the world before we know it. Living a life is the long reorientation process taking us from being nothing to being somebody with a distinct destiny.

406.

Thinking the worst of others is not unrelated to thinking the best of ourselves.

407.

Who hasn't seen it? The ferocious animal that catches another by the throat. And we? . . .

408.

Make no mistake about it! However great and good a person may be, there will always be some who, for reasons as diverse as their political ends or personal demons, will drag him into the mud.

409.

On the one side there is what could be called the country taste for a culture of familiarity and homogeneity. On the other side there is what could be called the city taste for a

culture of difference and diversity. These opposing features, which are to be found in virtually every society, are at the roots of the monstrous struggle currently tearing apart Western civilization. In other words, although this struggle is morally and politically charged to the hilt, although it involves people calling each other the most horrid names, it is fundamentally a difference in orientation, preference, habit, and a conditioned way of being.

410.

Until the day we've learned to start the conversation about our adversaries in a way different from what's the norm today, we won't be able to say there's been even a jot of progress in this area.

411.

When there's a scandal, the steam roller of public opinion can be so frightening that even those only remotely connected to it take active measures to prove there's *no* connection between them and it.

412.

The ego can be destructive just as a river that overflows its banks. But the first can no more be separated from society's most vital interests than the second from the earth's most fertile regions.

413.

To look at a fish in an aquarium and think: "Yes, at a very early point in my development as a human being, I wasn't much different from it!"

414.

If a brain such as Darwin's can produce the theory of evolution and Einstein's the theory of relativity, then why not imagine every brain, though its owner be consigned to oblivion, making its contribution to the great river of human development and/or the great ocean of human awareness?

415.

If there's any saying that might be called hackneyed yet keeps its freshness over time, it must be "politics makes strange bedfellows" simply for the reason that the bedfellows really do turn out to be strange.

416.

Anything scandalous in the camp of the adversary is blood in the water for those who wish to see it in disarray.

417.

As everyday spectators of events at the local, national, and international level, we are often glued to things that, if they happened to us, would unglue us completely.

418.

Irony of ironies! It could very well be that the most subtle avant-garde thought, once popularized, becomes more

dogmatic, emotional, and anti-intellectual than the thought to which it opposes itself.

419.

The newspaper has a vested interest in detecting and reporting on wrongdoing that, being profit-oriented, doesn't prevent it from doing its own kind of mischief.

420.

Every time the same facts are interpreted in a different way, a slight alteration occurs in the depiction of the world. This is a subtle or not so subtle process that goes on indefinitely and that, at any particular time, allows for a number of ways to "determine reality." . . . You ask if there are alternative worlds? Be assured there are and they're not so very far!

421.

We cannot live without the notions of good and evil, but nobody has ever proven that this opposition exists *subspecie*

***aeternatatis* despite an immense effort throughout history to think, imagine, believe, and claim otherwise.**

422.

The two great poles of attraction in human affairs are change and permanence. In some instances, it's the first that dominates; in others it's the second. Perhaps the most extensive representatives of these two poles in human thought are science (including technology) and religion (including diverse forms of metaphysical belief). But the first is no more absolute than the second since it always depends on fixed units and parts and the second no more absolute than the first since it can always die out and be replaced.

423.

Today, as always, there is this practice of wielding words as weapons with the violence and brutality that doing it in the name of good seems to license.

424.

One measure of a happy life might be managing to get through it without being resentful over the worst.

425.

In politics hypocrisy is blatant but more accepted than outrage against it would ever indicate.

426.

In the court of public opinion, the general rule is (in case no one has noticed) guilty until proven innocent.

427.

A: I'm addicted to the news.

B: But you're always complaining about it.

A: I must be addicted to my complaining then.

428.

A change of interests, tastes, predilections, objectives, and even ideas, how much of this is to fill a void that wasn't there when we were younger?

429.

It's quite possible that all warfare would cease and universal peace prevail if one day we were offered incontrovertible proof that the end of the world was nigh.

430.

Let us imagine a person perfect in every way. And then let us imagine this same person falling off from perfection and developing some minor defect. Rest assured there would be at least one other person who, noticing this minor defect and with malice in his heart, would treat it as if it were the mark of Cain.

431.

Perhaps the most common vice in politics is the practice of trying to make the other side look as if it were always in the wrong.

432.

Just as truth is the first casualty of war, so is it the perennial one in the political arena.

433.

A: I love my hate because it boils me up and gives me one of those moments of peak intensity that makes me feel truly alive.

B: That certainly is a frank admission of why you hate.

A: And it's so complicated! I even hate those who hate for the same reason.

B: But that smacks of hypocrisy, don't you think?

A: Who cares? Does an addict scruple about such matters? Just give me another fix!

434.

In geopolitics so much is theatre that it's safe to say the real play is offstage.

435.

After arriving at some goal or advanced stage in life, we usually don't find it too difficult to forget all the messiness that was part of our getting there.

436.

Sexually charged incidents or situations are common enough and may be criminal or criminalized for reasons as diverse as the ways in which both primal behaviour and primary codes of conduct manifest themselves.

437.

When it comes to thinking, believing, and expressing ourselves on a host of matters, we all live in a bubble that

might be best called the NOW.

438.

**All his life he was a smart operator,
And he got away with a lot;
But then he was finally caught;
And yet he still tried to be a smart operator (believe it or not),
For that's all he was ever taught.**

439.

**Here is someone who wants to be moral to the core. He
seems to be a saint. Here is another who wants to *know*
morality to the core. He seems to be both divine and
demonic. He wants to know truth but at what cost?**

440.

**When a new moral outlook moves beyond intellectual circles
and finds adherents at a more popular level, it's not long
before the whole of society is affected. But what is**

indispensable as part of this process is that an increasing number of leaders, celebrities, and opinion makers add their voice to the proceedings. How much of this is sincere and how much is self-serving or a form of self-protection is one of those discomfiting questions that tends to be raised only privately.

441.

Being successful in politics at the highest level means giving the impression that one is playing the game of good versus evil while playing one's game *beyond* good and evil.

442.

The best that we can do with all our laws is limit the worst. As for getting rid of it, a way has yet to be discovered.

443.

Think of it! Only a few hundred years ago it was possible to be burnt at the stake for speaking against the Church. To be sure, corruption was rampant in a monetary or material sense

but how this pales in comparison with the spiritual corruption which saw it become the tool of the Prince of Darkness and traitor to the Prince of Peace.

444

The moral sensibilities of an age are the boggy ground on which many are caught, some innocent and some not.

445.

The moral sensibilities of an age are like a great net that sometimes captures more than it should but is seldom prosecuted for overfishing.

446.

If there is a tendency in society to rank offences in terms of their gravity (or even their depravity) until this peaks somewhere in the area of greatest moral sensibility, there is also a countertendency that plays down differences and

degrees of severity in this selfsame area.

447.

There are some words used in public and repeated on a regular basis that are clearly intended to make one *feel* more than to make one think. Perhaps this is not so bad in and of itself for feelings do have a great deal of raw power. On the other hand, if ever there was a doubled-edged sword capable of doing both good and evil, this must be it.

448.

Being a genius usually means being worse than a lot of people at a good many things but incomparably better at one.

449.

The dream of one day being in the spotlight and the nightmare of one day being caught in a searchlight, have ever these two poles of human desire and destiny been closer than they are today?

450.

Never has violent imagery been so common and widespread – so socially acceptable, one might say – as it is today. And never have acts of random violence been so common and widespread despite our outrage and repeated outcries against them. Would it not be inappropriate to suggest that there is some inconsistency here?

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

451-500

451.

Every living organism exploits its surroundings. Here lies original sin.

452.

Be assured that human beings can be conditioned to feel guilty about everything and anything. Christianity started this and we're still not finished with it. Indeed, it's even possible to imagine a day we'll feel guilty about nothing less than our very presence on the planet. How we'll be able to get rid of our guilt then without getting rid of ourselves is a question that doesn't easily bear dwelling upon.

453.

The social bond or contract is so strong that, under certain circumstances, it can lead one to welcoming death on an individual or collective basis.

454.

Perhaps one explanation for the expansion and longevity of certain beliefs is their having, besides some key narrative and core principles or concepts of great range and depth, secondary aspects that may be eliminated, modified, or simply avoided by adherents who, for diverse reasons, are not receptive to them.

455.

No instinct is stronger than the social for the simple reason that it can count for more than survival.

456.

The social instinct is 24-7 or almost; the sexual sporadic or episodic at best.

457.

A: What is your endgame with these aphorisms?

B: Most people want to analyze, comment, and critique locally. I want to do this globally.

458.

The social is deeply tied up with identity. Wherever the second is lacking, so is the first. So it is that whoever is not identified as being one of us, whoever is the enemy, whoever is viewed as being a product or tool and little else – lose their so-called human rights (whatever the case may be elsewhere or among others) and often their life.

459.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's basic idea was that the human race started off in a state of innocence (which he identified as primitive society) and was corrupted by civilization. Basically, what he did was follow the biblical account (Garden of Eden, Original Sin, Fall from Grace, etc.) only update it with philosophical argument.

460.

A Modern-Day Parable: He'd thought of himself as a good person. He'd forgotten his sins. People liked him. He rose in the world. Then one day he had enemies. They exposed his sins. He tried to repent. But what he said came across as false or, if not false, certainly not sufficient to excuse him from public condemnation and possibly a criminal sentence. He suffered of course but so did his family. After he died, they still suffered. Collateral damage as it was later called by some people.

461.

**They say a revolution devours its own children. So does
Mother Earth – every day!**

462.

**If we become friendly, really intimate with death, then why
should it come like a thief in the night?**

463.

**What in a leader can be responsible for extraordinary
successes can also be responsible for enormous losses,
namely, an unshakable self-confidence.**

464.

**In the area of morality, a powerful example or illustration, even
if only mythical (or, perhaps, *especially* if mythical), will have a
far greater impact than argument when it comes to modifying
the behaviour of the majority of people.**

A: Beware those who condemn too quickly, my friend, for surely, it's not the milk of human kindness they have flowing in their veins.

B: No, but maybe they have the call of justice ringing in their hearts.

A: Ringing in their ears, perhaps, but in their hearts? Anyway, let's just say you're right. Then it seems to me there's an eternal dynamic in which justice springs out of injustice and injustice out of justice.

B: The two are completely opposite.

A: Idealistically speaking you're right but realistically speaking you're wrong.

B: And what about this distinction between ideal and real? It seems to me you're against all oppositions.

A: Yes, I'll admit the ideal crosses over into the real and vice-versa. So maybe we're both right.

B: A completely unsatisfactory conclusion!

A: Have you ever heard of a completely satisfactory one?

B: Yes, two plus two equals four. If that's not satisfactory, let me put forward some highly successful theory as an example.

A: A theory can always be overturned by more information,

more observations, etc.

B: This conversation is going nowhere.

A: So, I'll go back to my original question: Have you ever heard of a completely satisfactory conclusion?

B: I've heard of the completely satisfactory conclusion of killing one's opponent.

A: That won't do in your case, my friend, for although you're hostile to what I'm saying, you have the milk of human kindness, as I believe, flowing in your veins.

466.

How to describe prehistory in a few words: Speed, strength, size, stealth, savagery, super senses, and sabre-like teeth and claws slowly being matched and then put to shame by tools and teamwork of ever-increasing sophistication.

467.

Once human beings had fire in their possession, it was as if the universe had made a decision.

468.

The fact that philosophers keep coming back to the question “What is Philosophy?” shows that philosophy is fundamentally the problem of itself but not in the sense that this problem has to be or should be solved (except in the paradoxical sense of its acquiring direction and meaning by trying to do so). No, it’s only in the sense that there is no final answer to the question of what it is or, for that matter, what anything is.

469.

The two main political factions look at the violence committed by the other side or even slightly associated with it and try to make the case that it’s the worst. What silliness or, at least, what silliness this would be if violence were truly the issue at stake!

470.

Professionalism (from *Tales of a Free Spirit*): "Where people excel in certain areas and progressively decline in all others,

where polished and prepared speech takes the place of freshness and originality and half-lies to others the sounding of oneself, where calculation counts for more than candour or creativity and an ignoble success a noble defeat, and, finally, where machine-like efficiency draws the blood out of people's lives, faces, and words in such a way that they resemble manikins in motion, frozen forms of an organizational identity, there is professionalism."

471.

Has anyone ever noticed the striking resemblance between party politics and team sports? In both cases, one supports one's side and fights like the devil to win every match. Of course, this may go on for many years. But it's also possible that, for whatever reason, one ends up playing on the other side of the field. Then one of course fights like the devil to win every match against those one formerly called one's friends, teammates, comrades in arms, etc. Has anyone ever noticed that lifelong loyalty is not a featured part of the ethic of either one of these two activities?

472.

How difficult it is to realize that our interpretation of things is a folding out from ourselves of a particular world view that has already been folded in!

473.

Oh, to think that every day in the past was once as bright and new as any day today and now can only be seen as if through a glass darkly!

474.

If every person, particularly at the end of a long active life, were put on trial and, by virtue of the most searching inquiry, made to reveal all that was worst about their character past and present, public and private, then not even the most honoured man or woman would escape a blow to their self-esteem that, to any onlooker with a heart, would seem to be an act of utmost cruelty.

475.

Today's society warehouses the old – and it presumably does so with a good conscience – in places called Senior Citizens Homes as if they wanted nothing more than to be away from young people.

476.

Child (angrily): I didn't ask to be born!

Parent: Yeah, you didn't apply for it like I did.

477.

Maximizing the sins of one's opponent or enemy and minimizing one's own constitute the greatest sin that humanity perpetrates in its bid to bring enlightenment to all.

478.

There is much that we gainsay – much that we critique and condemn – that in subterranean ways offers up something by

no means unrelated to pleasure.

479.

There's virtually no position in philosophy, that, if one looks hard enough, doesn't allow for the discovery of new arguments to prop it up.

480.

Given that nothing is closer to us than our own thoughts, if they become our enemy, it's likely we'll have to confront a long-term, insidious, and debilitating foe.

481.

It's possible there are people who live their whole life without sin but, if so, they are far from being tormented saints who've had to overcome themselves.

482.

Twenty-five hundred years of philosophy and numerous philosophical systems have provided ample material for what can only be described as the fashionable and partisan elements of this activity.

483.

Things are so complex and contradictory that a great simplifier will always be welcome. Indeed, if he comes along in troubled times and offers some speedy solution, he will be given nothing short of – and sometimes much more than – a hero's welcome.

484.

The greatest, most desired, most common, and most subtle falsehood is that wherein it is said that the truth of such-and-such a matter is at bottom a simple affair.

485.

Truth is idealized as being absolutely identical to itself. In practise, however, it wars against falsehood in a way that makes these two opposites forever interpenetrate and overlap themselves.

486.

Honoured in one corner, hated in another, has there ever been a person in high position who has escaped this fate?

487.

Student: What did Wittgenstein mean by the *unsayable*?

Professor of Philosophy: Yes, there's much to be said on this matter. Let me begin by . . .

488.

If one were to do a survey of all the positions taken up over the last two hundred years on various subjects and in various

fields; if one were to take note of all the arguments put forward that support these positions and that seem to be presented in a rigorous, conscientious, and thorough way, then one must surely reach the conclusion that argumentative certainty is one of the most tenacious and inexpugnable illusions we have.

489.

What is the *trompe l'oeil* of argumentation? That the latest argument, seemingly irrefutable, seemingly so in step with the times or, for that matter, all time, can't be other than the last word on the subject.

490.

Philosophy's eternal predicament is that it must be both highly conservative and highly liberal: highly conservative in its commitment to perpetuating itself, highly liberal in its commitment to challenging and even risking itself.

Note: It's not a question of one being beneficial and the other not. The eternal predicament of philosophy is its condition of

possibility.

491.

Think of it! If the people we criticize in any way, shape, or form were able to be in our company at every moment and interrupt, rebut, and criticize us, it's quite likely we'd either be driven crazy or forced to adopt a strict rule of silence.

492.

Map all the concern that you have for yourself onto others and they should not be any more mysterious in their innermost depths than you are to yourself.

493.

Yes, the herd means much to the animal who belongs to it but when one of them is taken down by a predator, the others look on indifferently. Or, so it seems, for it could be that what's in us is also in them, only muted, concealed.

494.

When we're young, every moment is like an invitation, a seduction. When we're old, it's more like a confrontation or at best a challenge.

495.

Whatever threatens one's interests can easily lead to moral or ethical blind spots. Or, to put it another way, finding expedients to avoid having a bad conscience is part of the human condition.

496.

Our fine age has something new to offer to the palate, culturally speaking: moral hypersensitivity dished up with extreme crudity if not cruelty.

497.

While philosophy, as opposed to science, tends to go around

in circles, it has one advantage over the other in that its major texts never go out of date. In short, good reading is there for those who cannot do without it.

498.

The all too familiar can one day become the all too distant, something especially observable, sadly enough, among those who once shared many a meal, many a good laugh, and many a fond moment together.

499.

What is ultimately incompatible but at the same time absolutely vital in philosophy are the drive to clarity and the drive to comprehensiveness.

500.

The greatest democracy is the kingdom of death where great and small, rich and poor, good and bad, beautiful and ugly, strong and weak, wise and foolish, famous and forgotten,

blessed and cursed find their first community, their pre-existing commonality.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

501-550

501.

The leader of a country, particularly one that is a world power, is likely to find his principles elastic enough when confronted with the choice between keeping to the moral high ground and abandoning it for some tactical or strategic reason.

502.

The whole (art) of argumentation lies in singling out and outlining the weak or missing points in somebody's discourse while giving the impression that one's own is absolutely free of them.

503.

There is this about philosophy: one can choose the one that

one finds most suitable – for there are certainly enough of them – and wear it like a shell or a shoe for the rest of one's life.

504.

A: Coming back to Nietzsche later in life, one finds it excessive. And yet one still remains a Nietzschean. Why?

B: Perhaps because he said louder and longer than anyone else what you believe, namely, that what is called evil is every bit as necessary as what is called good and that the two together spell life.

A: But people will object that evil must be eliminated. And that anyone who implies otherwise is himself evil.

B: Evil will no more be eliminated than the fight against it or all the evil done in the name of fighting against it.

A: It's that complicated?

B: Only for those with eyes to see this sort of thing. The rest prefer the binary view. It fits in better with what's usually said on the matter.

505.

A: I'm sure most people take me to be a good person but if they saw my worst moments, I'd be pierced to the quick. On the other hand, I'm very good at forgiving myself these moments.

B: So, it's not getting caught by others that makes you so forgiving of yourself. Don't you see a problem with that?

A: I'm haunted by my imperfections in a world itself imperfect and capable of being both just and unjust. No doubt I've escaped some blows it could have delivered but, as far as justice goes, it's not always easy to say where it is.

B: The law tells us where it is.

A: Oh, no doubt! It's just that it can come with a fair bit of cruelty. Something I manage to avoid even in my worst moments.

506.

The great philosopher's works aren't widely read but his political views are well known. Since they're compatible with hundreds of thousands if not millions of other people's, he's hailed from all quarters as being a man of genius.

507.

Taken in the broadest sense, there are so many inequalities in society that justice is required as a great harmonizing and homogenizing counterbalance.

508.

Justice will be free of injustice the day it disappears as concept, theory, practice, and institution.

509.

The idea of eradicating inequality is an absurdity that nonetheless results in an ongoing process of correcting whatever aspects of it are deemed to be harmful.

510.

One advantage of philosophy is that it's a conversation you can return to without worrying too much about what you missed while away.

511.

It's quite possible that women will take over the planet with the mission of saving it from all sorts of man-made problems. How successful will they be? That's another question. Additional thought: Perhaps nothing will save it short of giving it back to the animals.

512.

When it comes to foreseeing the future, even the best of minds fall short. So much remains unseen as the present steals into the future and slowly lights up its vast halls.

513.

So many of the people that we pass every day, are they real or are they ghosts? Real if we happen to talk to or touch them. Ghosts if we don't and never do.

514.

Interests stand so close to ideals that arguing in defence of the latter is hardly ever a thoroughly innocent or honest affair.

515.

It's not pure reason but rather a changing world that makes what was formerly reasonable unreasonable and what was formerly unreasonable reasonable.

516.

A: Sometimes you sound like you're on the right, sometimes on the left. What gives?

B: Have you heard the parable about putting new wine into old bottles? In a literal sense, it means that the wine can cause the bottles to burst. In a figurative sense, it can mean that new ways of thinking dislodge and destroy old frames of reference. Right and left, conservative and liberal, religious and progressive, what are these but oppositions that get so

much use from so many people it's getting harder and harder on the nerves? Oh, I don't know where it's all going. I just know it will go.

517.

When certain people do certain things in the arts, in the sciences, or in sports, they seem almost superhuman. But when they talk politics, as sometimes is their wont, they aren't much different from anyone else. Of course, this isn't to deny the tremendous aura they carry over to what otherwise is most likely a mediocre affair.

518.

Hyper-masculinity, hyper-femininity, and everything that exists or may exist in-between isn't likely to disappear from the world. Of course, one species or other may dominate for a time (just as it goes with trees in a forest) and may even result in the decimation of others. But just as there is more than one forest, one region, one climate, one country, so there are always instances and possibilities of different outcomes.

In point of fact, a world is this drive to diversity – one might even say hyper-diversity – and anything less would be the end of it.

519.

Look at how it is in the animal world! With a good many of them, courage has limited value since they usually have more reason to flee than to fight. On the other hand, limited courage would be the end of those that must bring down other animals, some possibly as dangerous as them.

520.

We could say this about the opposition between men and women, namely, that it's the scene of intermittent or even constant struggle with varying degrees of injustice, suffering, and so on. On the other hand, all that one need do is look at the literature if not life itself to see how compelling and passionate in character it has been (not to mention foundational) and, without being clairvoyant, predict that the disappearance of it would change the world irrevocably.

521.

The majority of people are very good, learned, and wise in a few areas but terribly ignorant in everything else. If this weren't true, it would be impossible for some political pied piper to come along, lead them by the nose, and, in some cases, off the cliff.

522.

A: Oh, it's easy enough today to say that Adolf Hitler was a monster (what's difficult today is to say otherwise), but how many were saying this in the 1930's?

B: But they weren't able to see everything we can see today: extermination camps, millions dying on the battlefield, and so on.

A: All very true, I can't contest this. But how is it that a monster remains so completely imperceptible to so many people?

B: You have your idea. What is it?

A: It's the idea that he wasn't so imperceptible as a monster in the 1930's but that this was counterbalanced (i.e, this readily accessible view of him as a demonically driven character) by

the general belief that he was doing great things. Only when everything went terribly wrong, when horror, death, and destruction enveloped the German people, was his fate sealed forever.

B: So, you're saying if the Germans won the war . . .

A: I'm not saying anything except where they were in the 1930's is where we all potentially are.

523.

We are as actors on a stage. Put into different roles, we would learn to speak the lines we thought we never would.

524.

If every generation could hear what certain representatives of the preceding ones said, they would know that they too thought they could cut through the Gordian knot of morality.

525.

In morality there is no modesty.

526.

The nature of morality isn't trying to understand it but decking oneself up in it.

527.

All political news and commentary function like a giant stomach that consumes, along with important matters, a horrible amount of trash. The digestive and defecatory processes of this operation are not often easy to distinguish.

528.

There are no pure arguments that, by themselves, change a person's way of thinking but only good or effective ones that change the way of thinking of a person who, for reasons often not revealed or understood, is already predisposed to having his mind changed.

529.

Lieutenant X killed Lieutenant Y in an extremely daring, dramatic, and spectacular way. This incident happened some time after Lieutenant Y had played an especially mean trick on Lieutenant X that, although not fatal, caused him to suffer horribly. Immediately after having killed his fellow officer, Lieutenant X broke down and cried. Later he thought to himself that his reaction must have been due to there being a number of witnesses present. After all, he knew very well that, even while he was crying, he was secretly exulting.

530.

The reason party politics can never be a wholly honest affair is that, first of all, it's a highly competitive game with winning being, if not everything, of considerable importance. Second, it's largely based on trying to please an immense populace composed of many different groups with often conflicting interests. Third, party loyalty often demands following an official line despite whatever disagreement one might have with it. Finally, there are very few occasions on which, in this environment, serious self-criticism isn't toxic.

531.

A: Why, I sometimes feel it in myself too! This speaking in a pretentious way! This overstepping the bounds of what one truly knows! This pontificating! This playing the authority figure!

B: Your space is little so what does it matter?

A: Oh, but perhaps my space is big! Perhaps it's the future!

B: But now you're overstepping the bounds of what you truly know.

A: I'm constantly doing this but also constantly reminding myself of it.

B: And is there greatness in this?

A: I will think so until I find a thinker who has gone further in this direction.

532.

A thing that's repeated a thousand times is thought to be understood through and through – all illusion!

533.

Upon listening to a learned scholar argue, one can't help wondering does not his tone and manner of delivery, the level of certainty he brings to his subject, misrepresent entirely his situation as well as our own? Does not his professional bearing keep all eyes and ears away from the fact that, as knowledge seekers, we are lantern bearers in rooms that, however well we light them up, will remain forever unknown or obscure to those who come after us in the distant if not-so-distant future.

534.

An argument has an agenda which is good from the point of view of its being interesting, alive, and action-oriented, but bad from the point of view of its coming with a sort of dogmatic closure. To be sure, other arguments will come along not only to prevent this state of affairs from persisting without challenge, but also to seek ways to have this closure "recalibrated."

535.

Sex, when it's upon us, seems like everything.

536.

In politics the thinking seems to be: "Why bother with long arguments when ad hominem ones are so much more economical and, with most people, effective?"

537.

Just as information not liked or wanted is often called propaganda, so an argument not accepted or recognized is often dismissed as sophistry.

538.

You say you can't rewrite history? Why, nothing could be further from the truth.

539.

The judgment of a person based on one or two incidents in his life is always an expression of the cruelty that resides in the will to punish or take revenge.

540.

In his *Confessions*, while expounding upon a considerable number of self-delusions that afflicted him throughout his life, Jean-Jacques Rousseau gives the impression, certainly not desired or aimed at, that his writing about them is itself a form of self-deception. He seems to take this writing to be an objective account of his life rather than an apology for it with the emphasis being on proving both to us and himself that his worst actions never sprang from a wicked heart.

541.

How to reduce in the simplest, broadest, and most non-prejudicial way the political and moral divide between people:

On the one side, the people who love the life of the country. On the other, the people who love the life of the city. On the one side, the people who value head over heart. On the other, the people who value heart over head. Nothing, of course, prevents one of these oppositions from periodically changing its alignment with the other. Nothing, of course, prevents any of this from getting out of hand, given that the devil is in the details.

542.

Take almost anything under the sun and, depending on one's attitude towards it, it can be either dignified or disparaged.

543.

Apart from the admittedly important and widespread case of things that wear out and need to be replaced, new doesn't necessarily mean better.

544.

For those involved in war, a wholesale commitment to winning invariably rules out a wholesale commitment to truth.

545.

Impartiality in a third party is barely tolerable to a partisan and insufferable when detected in some second party.

546.

Broadly speaking, it's not at all certain that the search for truth is what dominates intellectual discourse. After all, though a dystopian or apocalyptic vision might be as justifiable as a utopian one, it's only the latter that has served as an intellectual beacon throughout the ages. And this for reasons that no doubt range from the fear of death to the need for a conversation without end.

547.

When a scholar criticizes some work or discourse for being more rhetorical than argumentative, one should ask: “Is this criticism itself an example of being rhetorical?” Surely the answer will be yes if it hasn’t been demonstrated where and why the work in question is rhetorical and where and why argumentative.

548.

The passage from life to death may be expressed wryly by the sentence: “Once you’ve done it all, you want to forget it all.”

549.

Ethic of modern medicine: Even those recalcitrant and depressed souls who are kicking and screaming for death should be dragged back to life.

550.

All his life he was a thinker. He made love to his mind and, as a consequence, forewent much that usually goes by the name of love.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

551-600

551.

One principle that belligerent nations have followed since time immemorial is while doing wrong themselves, accuse the enemy of the worst things imaginable.

552.

Virtually all discourses and, in particular, formal ones are inflected by the moral sensibilities of the age. Very often this inclination, which can also be viewed as an affectation, takes the form of duly noting (one doesn't let it slip by in conversation, in other words) some socially approved thought or sentiment: "Yes, of course, I strongly uphold X and categorically condemn Y, but it seems to me . . ." Such a manner of speaking is particularly evident when a point or issue comes up that can't be avoided and that, in however slight or trivial a way, runs counter to the prevailing narrative.

553.

Morality is the age-old practise which, at the very least, has the inbuilt tendency of identifying local values with what is or should be everywhere and for all time.

554.

What! You say that being a partisan doesn't rule out telling the truth of a matter? Quite right! But there is never just one matter, there are always many and so . . .

555.

If it's true great leaders can do great wrong, it's also true that, apart from a few exceptions and what gets written in history books, they won't be brought to account for it.

556.

Apart from all other considerations, being a dyed-in-the-wool partisan or a person with prejudices is simply the outcome of

limited means. Give everyone unlimited resources in the way of time, energy, intellect, and inclination and see what a sea change there would be!

557.

When we stop communicating for some reason, often barely understood, with a long-time friend, family member, or loved one, it's often with the thought that, with a bit of luck, things will change, and the situation reverse itself. But quite often it doesn't, and the years go by, death all of a sudden intervening and ending the matter. It's almost as if, without knowing it and often long before this final rupture, we were saying to them, "It was great while it lasted. See you in eternity."

558.

Yes, it's a hard thought to bear. Not only is life full of the good fortune of some and the misfortune of others but something far more radical, namely, that the good fortune of some is wholly dependent on – not possible without – the misfortune of others. And to go even further, what if this

“some” is in fact all?

559.

If great works of the past such as the sphinx and the pyramids are mysteries, then how much more so the great works of nature!

560.

Yes, it seems to be the case that, just as there are many people who find it easier to think than to feel, so there are many people who find it easier to feel than to think. Should it be any surprise then if all their values – or at least a good many of them – follow from this? And, further, should it be any surprise if, on this basis, there’s a natural divide between people?

561.

Could there be such a thing as an absolutely intolerable and

destructive truth? How about this one: *Everything is ultimately inseparable from everything else?*

562.

The sort of ideological protest yet to come before the Deluge might be: “Just think of all the animals who don’t have any say in what people do to them. And you call this democracy?”

563.

The controversial scholar became a star because he spoke exceedingly well on a certain number of issues. Later, he became an even bigger star and spoke very well on a much larger number of issues. Finally, he became a veritable superstar and, although he still spoke well on a large number of issues, he also spoke not so well on some and even rather badly on a few.

564.

A paradox: If the values of cultural and ethnic diversity

became universal, there would be no diversity of values.

565.

Oh, you don't think that morality can be commodified? Just imagine for a moment a law being passed that would ban the use of all highly charged words from the media. Chances are that much of what they write or talk about would then become as non-profitable as this aphorism.

566.

There seem to be both a certain amount of stupidity and a certain amount of wisdom in all attempts to grasp the whole. Stupidity from the point of view that these attempts are doomed to fail; wisdom from the point of view that they always have a certain amount of practical, social, or political value.

567.

Yes, there's much in the news today that's controversial but

it's also highly repetitive. It's easy to make the prediction then that people will eventually get bored with it.

568.

With a sufficiently broad view of the matter, it's just as reasonable to think of dying as going to heaven and becoming a star as it is to think of it as bodily decay and decomposition.

569.

At every stage of one's life there are things one can do that one couldn't do before and things one did before that one can no longer do. The trick is to give the first way of looking at the matter centre stage rather than the second.

570.

When we are enjoying the good things of life, we tend to think they will last forever. It's as if we purposely blind ourselves to all the evidence around us and imagine that we alone, for some mysterious reason, are exempt.

571.

Christianity in the Middle Ages helped people into life, through life, and out of life.

572.

When Alexander Solzhenitsyn describes the different means of torture used against political prisoners in Soviet Russia, it makes Dante's Inferno look like a visit to an amusement park.

573.

Every teaching or doctrine can catch a glimpse of the whole which is to say it can make some significant claims about what is true. That's why so much is not entirely unacceptable or bereft of followers and defenders. Of course, a partisan won't accept this. They must maintain their point of view in the face of all others, including what's contained in this aphorism.

574.

There are people who suffer daily from one thing or another or even have suffered all their lives. How can we, who have always enjoyed good health and relative security and stability, ever identify with them? But, one insists, there is a moral obligation to do so. It sometimes gets the name of pity or compassion. Let us admit that there is this obligation. But, for most of us, will it ever be anything more than a passing affair? Should it be anything more? As ever, the devil is in the details. Framing universal notions about how one should behave always works better in theory than it does in practise.

575.

Man's fate can be summed up as angelic considerations, devilish details, results that can be everything and anything.

576.

No doubt there are at least a few religious people who

secretly commit heinous acts. If they are not complete monsters, they will likely think that God, who can look into their hearts, will forgive them their trespasses. On the other hand, they know very well that society won't be so tolerant. Could it be these people who are essentially living double lives know in their heart of hearts that, whereas they are basing their outlook on "intentions," society will base the morality of their position on consequences or even perceived consequences and the need for both correction and deterrence?

577.

An aphorism should avoid everyday language on current issues because, often enough, it is riddled with assumptions never recognized as such.

578.

To say things without varnish and in the simplest possible way, sex can only become a major preoccupation when one has a full stomach, comfortable living quarters, a healthy

body, and a mind untroubled by other concerns.

579.

Instruction, persuasion, and coercion make up the cocktail of social coherence.

580.

To think there have been societies where people have been imprisoned and executed simply for having, or even merely suspected of having, the wrong religious or political beliefs!

581.

Think of those dried-up things called Egyptian mummies. And then think of the people who built the pyramids. Magnificence, morbidity, and mortality all rolled into one!

582.

Take up a position in life and a way of thinking is almost forced on you.

583.

And then there are those feats of earlier humanity hardly known or thought of by most of us. The fact that, for example, people started spreading out from one part of the world hundreds of thousands of years ago and by making long and arduous journeys – by crossing deserts, mountains, rivers, seas, oceans, and polar regions – eventually found new homes and new lives.

584.

It seems that James Joyce wrote his notoriously difficult novel, *Finnegans Wake*, with himself in view as the only person who would ever fully understand it.

585.

Make no mistake about it. When having to deal with foreign elements considered unfriendly or hostile, most politicians, whether they be on the right or the left, prefer to come across as being tough and aggressive rather than fair and reasonable.

586.

Yes, it's true! In politics as in other areas, one can criticize until the cows come home. But to put something in place that works, that's always another matter. On the other hand, one should always be careful what one puts in place, especially in politics. It could always turn out to be monstrous. Indeed, there is yet another dimension potentially tragic or even catastrophic. It's that when something is put in place, it develops its own logic and momentum, often becoming indifferent to other concerns. When something is working relatively well in society, it's best to be careful how one goes about making it even better.

587.

When it comes to implementing and enforcing certain policies, administrators are often very conservative in the sense that open-mindedness and free expression are not what's given priority but rather scrupulous attention and fidelity to the prevailing way of thinking.

588.

In all partisanship, no matter how fair and honest it may be, a false note must slip in for the simple reason that it can never quite do justice to what it opposes.

589.

There are people who, if we were intimate with their lives from beginning to end (such as we often are with a brother's or sister's), would make us love them even if we hate them.

590.

And he said of his brother in later years: “When he was more fun-loving than full of himself, I loved him.”

591.

Yes, they are young and foolish. They have strength in numbers and are violent in the name of good with reasons they can barely articulate beyond slogans. So, what else is new?

592.

The will to truth is inextricably tied to the will to power. How could it be otherwise when the claim to know the truth is virtually synonymous with the claim to have the right to act in accordance with it?

593.

Let's say certain things, such as diplomatic relations and

international affairs, particularly at the highest political level, are treated as one giant high-stakes game. Would it not be relatively easy then for the players to pardon themselves for even those acts that, under most circumstances, would be called evil?

594.

When we're young, all that we do seems everything. When older, a passing glory.

595.

Attacking the injustices of a system is one thing; replacing it with a system that doesn't give birth to its own is another.

596.

Inbuilt to all polemics is the willingness to slug it out and even throw mud if necessary.

597.

A: Quick conversation cuts corners. Truth is therefore compromised even by the best speakers. On the other hand, long, slow conversations take the risk of being less interesting. Truth is no more separable from interest – or from interests – than it is from power.

B: When you talk like this, you sound like a postmodernist.

A: I certainly have one foot in that camp, but I also have one in another. After all, I have my own set of interests just like everyone else. Who will compromise on their personal interests unless forced to?

598.

Could it be that current issues such as the threat of global warming (which is spoken of as a matter of grave concern mainly by those on the left) and the threat of globalization (which is spoken of in similar terms mainly by those on the right) are, at least as they are laid down to the general public and successful in reaching a large number of people, royal falsehoods? It must be so for no other reason than that exaggeration and repetition, along with raising the alarm, are

highly effective ways of influencing people.

599.

Rest assured that, whether they be on the right or the left, a person or party that acquires god-like powers will exercise them, at certain moments, like the devil incarnate.

600.

A party or faction that wants to change the world but faces serious opposition (and when isn't there serious opposition?) has no choice if it wants to succeed but play the tyrant. Ultimately, its moral position boils down to that tried-and-true principle: the end justifies the means.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

601-650

601.

What was the glacial mass that covered most of North America and parts of Europe during the last ice age if not a frozen ocean on land? What happened when a piece of cosmic debris (so goes one hypothesis) hit this glacial mass? The answer is that this frozen ocean on land became the flooding of the land. On this basis and this basis alone (so it is easy to believe about these ancient believers), various peoples in different parts of the world came up with flood myths and retained them over the course of time.

602.

There's stuff done in private not fit to be put before the public except as a work of art.

603.

**A possible way of thinking for, about, or in the future is:
“Don’t be afraid of death! Opportunities after it are wide
open!”**

604.

**Is a person now working, now thinking, now sleeping, now
sexually aroused the same person, or one possessed first by
one devil then by another? And what does it mean to be the
same person beyond having a proper name, a personal and
private memory, a body distinct from all others, and a socially
acquired and biologically based identity?**

605.

**In politics what often counts the most is perception. Facts
can come, whether to affirm the perception or not, later.**

606.

The reason that perception counts for so much in politics is that one of its most common practises is persuasion and that persuasion based on perception, no matter how shallow either one of them may be, gets immediate results.

607.

Collectively, we put the blame on politicians for a lot of skulduggery that they in turn can wash their hands of by saying that it serves the public interest.

608.

In the face of outside criticism, the corridors of power often prove to be equipped with an effective sound barrier.

609.

What we love when we love is not only the one beloved but also our loving selves.

610.

Sensationalism in science? Yes, even there it can make the difference between getting attention, that is, getting published and not. But woe to those who come up with sensational stuff considered to be unacceptable or that falls outside existing paradigms!

611.

To think that, when going into a senior citizens home or passing a graveyard, it's virtually impossible to wrap one's head around what those people once were.

612.

A: Regarding pornography, it takes me to where it tantalizes and where I cannot go otherwise.

B: You're sinful!

C: You're sick!

D: You're sexist!

A: And you three, whatever you may be individually or

collectively, are certainly not the three wise monkeys.

613.

A: In order to bring more honesty and justice into the world, would you be willing to accept a significant drop in your standard of living?

B: There you have it! I'm afraid that, like virtually all other people, I have moral pretensions that, if push came to shove, would unquestionably fall short. It would seem then that these pretensions are more for ourselves than for anyone or anything else.

A: And yet there are people who do try to apply these ideals to the rest of the world.

B: Undoubtedly. But what percentage of the human race are we talking about? And even with these well-motivated souls, how often do we see them go off the rails? For it's one thing to have ideals in some personal or abstract way. It's quite another to try to bring them about in a social or political sense.

A: I would hardly dispute that. But there are quite a number of people who, at times, are willing to get out on the street and fight for justice.

B: And my cynicism doesn't run so deep as to say they don't sacrifice anything in the process. On the other hand, what would really be needed to change the world – and, by this, I mean something more than merely rearranging the moral furniture – would be lifelong commitments to the ideals in question from every single human being. I'm afraid we're far from that.

614.

What is necessary for the adult is to be found in the child. And what is necessary for the child is to be found in the egg. And what is necessary for the egg is to be found in the species. And what is necessary for the species is to be found in the simplest forms of life. And, now, does it not seem the most erroneous thing to call the simplest forms of life simple?

615.

War is that most horrible and yet most heroic thing that has helped to keep a historical memory. But now a corner has been turned and it threatens to wipe it out.

616.

Those in power learn to lie easily for essentially two reasons: to serve themselves and to serve the greater cause.

617.

It must be confessed that the way we look upon the world, the way we view things in general (including right and wrong) is deeply tied up with what we are as a particular person leading a particular life and thrown into a particular situation. The latter, being historical, cultural, social, religious, and political, goes a long way in constituting our knowledge, feelings, and identity.

618.

In the moral or political sphere, nothing produces greater irritation than hearing bad arguments argued well, that is, with a certain amount of adroitness and finesse.

619.

When politicians come out with dire reports loaded with accusations but short on details, beware, beware!

620.

If one focuses on the world as a place where politicians can spin out lies, where the media can run with them, and where people can swallow them hook, line, and sinker, then there isn't much evidence of a so-called higher civilization.

621.

A: Imagine all the people who had bitten the dust while he was still flourishing.

B: Yes, and now he has bitten the dust.

A: And no one should celebrate it too much, even if he was a monster, for in it is written all our stories.

622.

It's becoming increasingly evident that all who play with strategic smarts on the world stage are more or less dumb actors in a play written by some god or devil whose genius has inspired him to come up with a tragedy to end all tragedies.

623.

Do you see that ant hill over there? Do you see how its inhabitants, its residents and citizens, hustle and bustle about? Do you see how hard they protect it and how much they expand and rebuild it? And do you think that these creatures don't care about it in some great and mysterious way? And then, to think of what can happen to such anthills: the destruction, the chaos, the colossal upheaval! Is this the ineluctable destiny of so much careful construction? Is this the destiny of all such craftsmanship and art as both natural and human process?

624.

It may be that whole societies conjure up bogymen and fan the fear of them to keep away the thought of the Damoclean sword hanging over their heads.

625.

It must be admitted that some politicians, no matter how despicable, are amazing jugglers! How do they keep so many balls in the air?

626.

If everybody's dark side were exposed to public view, what a rogues' gallery humanity would seem to be!

627.

With respect to the media nowadays, it seems that making as much money as possible means being as sensational as possible, polarizing public opinion as much as possible, slanting

information as much as possible, and slandering some person or party as much as possible. All this while maintaining a good conscience, a straight face, and a professional look by, on the one hand, making these moves with a sufficient degree of craft and subtlety and, on the other, pretending that they simply don't exist as part of their operation.

628.

It would be fair to say that, when it comes to their enemies, politicians feel they have a licence to lie. It may even be that, in such instances, they consider it to be a virtue.

629.

The greatest rogue nation in the world is most likely to be the most powerful for the simple reason that it can get away with the most.

630.

In international affairs, might is not right in principle but in

practice it both is and is not, depending on the circumstances.

631.

I watch the ant. It gives the impression of knowing what it's doing. By contrast, I really don't know what it's up to. Ergo, the ant is much more knowing and intelligent in its sphere of activity than I am. But to feel this way, one must think of the ant as not only being caught up in its environment and the minutiae of everyday life but also mastering them.

632.

Perhaps the most common or widespread form of foolishness is being certain about what is largely uncertain. Like all things, it cuts both ways but, in the long run, perhaps we should be grateful for this vain, fatuous, gullible, irascible element since virtually nothing would ever have gotten done without it.

633.

One is never truly aggrieved by the loss of what one no longer loves or desires or has never loved or desired.

634.

A: Thank God for scandal! Thank God for character assassination! Were it not for these, a large number of people – perhaps the majority of us – wouldn't be able to feel superior to the best human beings.

B: You're joking, of course.

A: I'm joking, in part.

635.

***Life is capricious:* They were both fifteen, and, for the first time, they were alone together. They were out in the country on a perfect evening. In front of them was the stolid horse that pulled their wagon. Of course, they couldn't talk all that easily, but this mattered little since their eyes, their voices, their laughter, their expressions conveyed so much of the**

wonder, the charm, and the pleasure of their newly found mutual attraction. “Oh, if only such happy dream-like states could go on forever!”, thought the boy. But suddenly the horse, as if to break the spell and teach him a hard lesson (but with a certain “animal humour”), lifted its tail and shamelessly defecated.

636.

Beware, beware, you “chosen people”! Losing faith in yourselves and your destiny will be your destiny since you no longer simply crush other peoples but place ever greater demands on yourselves to be just and good.

637.

In controversial matters, it is far more common for a person or party to try to occupy the moral high ground – to criticize, condemn, and even malign others – than to try to understand fully the opposing point of view. Apart from determining whether this itself is reproachable or not, it is perhaps worth noting that the second way of proceeding, the way of

understanding, is one that, if not involving a lot more work, certainly cuts against the grain and is far more difficult to sustain.

638.

In most cases, information is useful. In some cases, it is even vital. In other cases, such as when one has fourth stage metastatic cancer, its value is questionable.

639.

Among adversaries, one side generally hides its faults and failings while the other side not only exposes but exaggerates them. No doubt this has been the recipe since the dawn of time for much in human affairs that goes down in a less than agreeable way between countries and people.

640.

What seems so personal and precious, that is, our consciousness and our feelings, our consciousness *of* our

feelings, would be as nothing without the whole of life about us, without all the people about us, both living and dead.

641.

We are blessed in life if much that has failed or is failing is overwritten by what has succeeded or is succeeding.

642.

Sexuality and personal identity are two powerful forces that have the power both to converge with and confound each other.

643.

Everything that is great but of hidden value must eventually be mixed with a certain amount of the mediocre if it is to become popular or profitable.

644.

One party has a vested interest in exaggerating the importance of some newly discovered facts and ideas for economic, political, or aesthetic reasons. Another party has a vested interest in shooting down such facts and ideas because they are in opposition to its line of thinking. On one side, the liberal or revolutionary; on the other side, the conservative or institutionalized. Only a complex sorting out over time will tell us where the truth lies or, to put it another way, whether the conservative or institutionalized side can manage to maintain the status quo or whether the liberal or revolutionary side can go from being scorned and rejected to vindicated and accepted.

645.

Happy children, wherever you may be! What would the world be without you!

646.

Every age acts as if had just invented a perfect morality, at least in thought or theory, and that every previous age had just been stumbling around for it.

647.

Polarization sets in when both sides of a difference or dispute feed to their adherents what they most want to hear as highest concern.

648.

What! So, you don't have sex anymore? Then what have you lost? Something that never took up more than a fraction of your waking life even in the headiest days of youth. Or, to say it another way, ninety per cent of the time it was only *anticipation* of having sex.

649.

Calling one's work scientific to justify one's position or one's conclusions is not itself a scientific act but rather a political one.

650.

In human society there pops up from time to time something so monstrous that it can't be found anywhere in the animal world: the willingness to cause immense harm and suffering to others for pure pleasure alone and for no other reason.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

651-700

651.

Said the predator to his prey: “My love for you is so intense, so all-consuming, that I must hold you in a fatal embrace and make you one with me.”

652.

Political talk, however much it may be necessary as part of a systematic effort to guide and change human behaviour, will never be the most honest or truthful. To put the matter rather bluntly, except for long after the fact, politicians can never admit their proximity to or complicity in coercive, corrupt, and even cruel practises.

653.

The political will never be able to bring about a perfect world

because its means can never be pure, its practical course never so straight and unerring that it doesn't end up, at least to some degree or other, making a mockery of its putative ends.

654.

What is called truth at any particular time is that plus an associated dogma. The two are inseparable.

655.

Excessive repetition of anything, rather than reinforcing it, should make one suspicious of it.

656.

Discrimination based on race, sex, age, social standing, etc. can never be eliminated but only minimized. Let anyone who thinks differently show themselves to be possessed of god-like virtues or capable of angelic effects.

657.

**Energy, grace, good looks, all go on the side of youth. What!
And some of you would even grant it – as if to rob all later life of
some redeeming quality or meaningful advantage – *depth*?**

658.

**What is genius? A select number of moments in the lives of a
select number of people. The rest of their lives, apart from the
work, is non-genius.**

659.

**Free speech is an important principle almost universally
acknowledged in democratic society but with the caveat of its
having certain limitations. The problem is, and forever will be,
that where some people see such-and-such limitations as
being just and necessary, others see them as being arbitrary
and an infringement on their right to free speech.**

660.

One side sees radical social change as the brave new world to come. The other side sees it as the destruction of the world already in place and in which they feel most at home. Is anybody wrong here? Is anybody right? Surely not in their basic attitude but only in the thousand and one ways this attitude can manifest itself as a prolonged and wide-sweeping struggle. The devil is in the details, a cliché that, unlike most others, can bear repeating.

661.

Jogger (running past graveyard): Hi guys, how ya doin'?

Graveyard: We're waiting for you.

Jogger: Not today, thanks, at least if I can help it.

Graveyard: Well, we have time.

662.

A: Yes, it's terrible! Yes, it's outrageous! Yes, it's deceitful and dishonest and stupid and so many other things. And yet,

like so many others, I'm fascinated by it.

B: Fascinated by what?

A: You know. You can't help but know. The daily news!

663.

A: I must confess that I've never been able to talk with the wholesale certainty that so many people do, often well but also often badly, on so many subjects.

B: Yes, it's a gift that some people have (I'm talking about the few that do it well) that allows them to carry on some very interesting, engaging, and I daresay vital talk. On the other hand, as truth tellers trying to tell all on matters that will forever remain infinitely complex, their wholesale certainty is as bogus as much of what they likely criticize, condemn, or confront.

664.

A common human weakness is that, once we have identified some person, group, or country as the enemy, we only want to hear the worst about it. Anything else tends to go against that

almost universal desire to see our judgments and opinions confirmed. Needless to say, this weakness is exploited by all who have a vested interest in shaping public opinion.

665.

Generally speaking, ad hominem arguments say much more about the person using them than they do about the person being attacked by them.

666.

People who have a very strong and determined point of view, whether they be professionals or not, often show that they don't accept a contrary view by abusing both it and the one who expresses it.

667.

When an interviewer repeatedly uses the line, "You didn't answer my question," he seems to be implying that his questions are God-given or at least framed with such care, precision, and high seriousness that they should be

answered squarely on all points – in a sort of catechetical way.

668.

Time rolls on, time rolls on! Everyone says this and – you know what? – it does!

669.

Perhaps if we had the right perspective on things and didn't take so much for granted, we would think every time we had a pleasant encounter with a strange and even familiar individual: "Boy, that was lucky!"

670.

Yes, one may say that the world has improved greatly in this or that but there still remains the fundamental question which may also be called the "Hamlet question": Has it grown more honest?

671.

When it comes to the expression of so much hostility in the comments sections of certain online forums, one can only think: “So many people must have lives that fall short of their expectations for so much energy to be expended like this.”

672.

To go by all the talk nowadays, one would think that it's more heinous to hate someone for their skin colour, ethnicity, sex, or sexual orientation than it is to hate them for some other more or less unjustifiable reason.

673.

When you're very young, getting old seems almost impossible. When you're very old, being young once seems almost like a fiction.

674.

The only news that knocks us off our pedestals is personal while all other news (we must factor in here how it is fashioned and how we select it) tends to make us think we're on one.

675.

Since the news media in either a presumably democratic or non-democratic society has a vested interest in slanting a sizable number of stories for profit or political reasons, how can there be anything other than “fake news”?

676.

Morally speaking, what makes this world complicated beyond measure is that entertainment, or at least a fair part of it, is irretrievably caught up in horror. After all, is it not the case that more than a few people will watch a war on TV or at the movies (let us leave aside all other scenes of cruelty and violence) with popcorn?

677.

A: When there are no more people watching wars on TV or at the movie theatre while eating popcorn (whether these wars be real or not), then I'll believe in the New Jerusalem.

B : I hardly know what you're saying.

A: Well, you see, it's built in. Failure in the moral sphere is every bit as inevitable as the will to make things perfect, to put before our eyes, in however imperfect a way, some utopia.

678.

Anyone who is inclined to think that a leader who has had a string of victories on the world stage is likely to have the same success in the future should, if they don't want to risk being rudely shocked, keep in mind that such historical figures as Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Adolf Hitler had their string of victories.

679.

When interests coincide, peace is precious. When they don't, maintaining relationships isn't given priority. Perhaps it's not so surprising then that, under the latter conditions, disruptions or downward-turning events occur which can range from breaking off a friendship to unleashing the dogs of war.

680.

What is reality? A multitude of perspectives, opinions, beliefs, theories, etc. with each one claiming with a rather high degree of confidence (if not dead certainty) that it is much closer to the truth than all others.

681.

What is the present? The reality we most take to heart along with the idea that we matter.

682.

To be a moral crusader without being partisan, that is, without having a prejudice, would be a magnificent but perhaps impossible feat. But what does seem possible is that even an imperfect approximation of this would rise to the level of being messianic in ways hitherto unimagined.

683.

It may be that having variety in our lives trumps everything else. If so, the moral sphere would have its value as being a great contributor to this state of affairs despite its encompassing much that is opposed to much else in this world (which usually goes by the name of “bad”) and even bent on its annihilation.

684.

The private parts of our bodies correspond to the secret parts of our lives that, however common they are and however much a part of the human condition, we would like to go unnoticed

and have forgotten, as if they had no significance (but perhaps it's all the other way) with respect to our being recognized as members of society in good standing.

685.

The pain that can be inflicted on us up to atrocious levels makes the present moment the nerve centre of our universe.

686.

In the name of honesty and perhaps much else, being on the right side of a political issue shouldn't mean being excused one's worst faults and failings. But given that the morality of such issues often has a fashionable and consequently favouring side to it, it is common enough.

687.

Bowel movements are a big enough part of our life but a small part of our conversation. What is indigestable is that they are the most animal part of us that even the animal can't dignify.

688.

The main difference between being young and being old is that, on the one hand, there is the perpetual promise of getting something and, on the other, the perpetual threat of losing the thing once gotten.

689.

A hot chick looking down at her cell phone is the latest standard for *la beauté décontractée*.

690.

Even the most beautiful lass has to wipe her ass.

691.

Trust should be highest with those who speak with an open mind and heart. All others, with possibly a few exceptions, should be listened to with caution.

692.

Of all large-scale activities, perhaps politics is the one that tries hardest to fit itself to the times. However, it is precisely this keeping one's eye on the ball in world affairs, this narrow focus on what seems to be most pressing and practical that make the majority of politicians overlook much that pertains to the times or rather to time itself. Not being the most adept readers of past, present, and future, they fail to see it as being less a technocratic tool than the shifting sands of all things.

693.

The problem with the press is not so much that it lies, but that it takes up one perspective and magnifies it to the point that all others, if not entirely hidden, are devalued and dismissed.

694.

To read a Shakespearean play is to have before one's eyes an incredible amount of treachery. Getting rid of it is surely a

longstanding moral or political objective. As a major stumbling block, however, there is the fact that, when the worst is thrown out the back, it can always find its way in through the front and vice-versa.

695

A: If progress is the same as growth, then it must have its declining course as well as its ascending one. It may be that, after centuries of political and moral struggle, the whole thing gets confused and no longer recognizes itself. It may even be that it grows senile.

B: Forever the optimist, aren't you?

A: Well, a person wouldn't be called a pessimist for – but I understand your point. When it comes to modern-day progress, it's supposed to go on indefinitely.

B: We shouldn't dismiss this possibility out of hand.

A: Believing this, I would say, is going from science to religion on the secular level.

696.

Yes, each and every one of us is unique but it still remains true that all we think, feel, and imagine comes from the world or, to put it another way, from what we normally thing is over against us.

697.

You say having more women in politics is a great thing, but I say having more people fall into line by following the party line isn't.

698.

It is the case that many who are attracted to a certain position and convinced by the arguments put forward to justify it have little patience or tolerance for anything that contradicts it short of a bombshell.

699.

Many if not the vast majority of people will hold until their dying day that certain values, principles, and ideals have, unlike a human life, no expiry date. However, absolute proof of this could only be attained by having universal agreement on all these points as well as related ones. In short, universal agreement on everything.

700.

One way to keep a healthy perspective on current debates in the public arena is to imagine how they would have appeared to our forebears and how they will appear to those yet to come.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

701-750

701.

Screaming headlines day after day! Scandal after scandal! But fifteen or twenty years later, who can tell you anything about them?

702.

Monuments in ruins retain a certain grandeur because whatever meanness they have can be attributed to the work of time. On the other hand, whatever meanness could be attributed to the times in which they were worked has been eliminated.

703.

It seems almost inevitable that, in certain areas of human development and interaction and over varying periods of time,

public morality will swing from the most outrageous insensitivity to the most incredible hypersensitivity. Now if these drastic changes of judgement and sentiment had nothing to do with the fact that morality itself can be immoral, that it can be used as a weapon or that it can easily have a fashionable or expedient side, then the end result could hardly be viewed as objectionable. The fact that it usually is seems to indicate that morality itself is every bit as complicated as human nature and that its cherished principles, whatever else may be said, are part of a grand over-simplification.

704.

Some are able to shine like a star for a moment or for a period of their lives but, apart from this, they live very much like the rest of us.

705.

A widespread shortage of food and water in the Western World, even if it didn't last too long and lead to mass starvation and other catastrophic events, would shake

things up so badly that many current issues would simply drop off the public's radar. It's quite likely then that, with the return to relative normalcy, the political and moral landscape, apart from the most conservative elements, would no longer be recognizable.

706.

The worst thing about getting old is that it effaces even what was only a partial everyday sort of glory.

707.

There are innumerable things in this world about which there is not the least reason to be secretive or deceptive and yet, despite this fact, are shrouded in mystery. What chance is there then, if there be any chance at all, of getting to the bottom of matters routinely covered up or lied about?

708.

"Don't let the facts get in the way of a good story!" This was once nothing more than a light-hearted joke about journalism.

709.

Yellow journalism was once an identifiable part of the profession.

710.

The mind is so malleable that, in the corridors of power and in the company of those where corruption can raise its flag, it often takes on the likeness of the devil's own save for some mitigating factors such as a smiling face, kindness towards friends and family, a sense of duty, and so on.

711.

The greatest country in the world could very well have as its

credo: “We’re all for peace but, if you get out of line, we’ll bomb you back to the stone age!”

712.

In international affairs, it’s common practise to look for the mote in one’s enemy’s eye while ignoring the beam in one’s own.

713.

To think that all the processes that keep a person alive – biological, psychological, sociological, and so on – would have to be tracked in nanoseconds to give the most complete account of them!

714.

A: Some see in this political leader a good heart. Others see a grotesque exterior. Don’t you see that both could be right?

B: Well, it so happens we’re partisans and, since he’s our man, we say only the first is true, namely, he’s great.

C: Well, it so happens we're partisans and, since he's definitely not our man, we say only the second is true, namely, he's a monster.

A: And so it shall forever be for what is at stake here, at least for two such contending parties, is not what is true or right but the winning claim.

715.

Politics can be a blood sport and when it is, we're all involved, no less than the spectators at a bull fight.

716.

Beauty and strength will certainly go, but wisdom, courage, integrity, and a good heart can last a lifetime.

717.

Discourses can range from the most formal to the most familiar, from the most sincere to the most hypocritical, from the most elegant to the most inept, and from the most sublime

to the most coarse and obscene. Given all this, what can one say but that there is an incomparable wealth of fruit and fertile soil in this most extensive and diverse of gardens that even includes what's necessary as fertilizer?

718.

King Lear made the third biggest mistake of his life at the very end of it. He gave away his kingdom to his two treacherous daughters while casting out his one true daughter who had also been his best loved one. His first biggest mistake was openly favouring this daughter, the youngest of the three, from the very moment she was born and with little concern for the other two. Never at any time did he take into consideration that, as small as they were, they showed definite signs of being aware of the situation. Never did he pay attention to information he received about their picking up on some of the palace talk concerning his obsession with the youngest. Finally, never did he heed their complaints about their sister's being treated in a way that, despite what they themselves enjoyed as luxury and privilege, surpassed what their father and a few others in the court reserved for them. (It should be mentioned that,

besides Cordelia's bearing a striking resemblance to her deceased mother, there were longstanding rumours that her sisters, Goneril and Regan, were illegitimate.) Lear's second mistake was, in the attempt to deal with certain behavioural problems the two older sisters developed, putting them in the care of two plotting and extremely duplicitous aunts (the harm done to them by this can hardly be exaggerated!) while the youngest, raised in the court by a devoted nurse and instructed by the best tutor in the land, was properly groomed to be a princess. It was in this context that Lear's first two mistakes came back to haunt him and, when combined with the third, proved disastrous. (The third mistake was in fact three: First, he misinterpreted a few seemingly harsh and unfeeling remarks his youngest made when he was about to bestow on her the best part of his kingdom. Second, because of their fawning and flattering talk, he was fooled into believing that his two oldest daughters loved him more than the youngest. Third, he ended up rewarding the two schemers by giving them his entire kingdom while banishing the youngest without a dowry.) In short, his two oldest daughters, once they had charge of him, stripped him not only of certain privileges but his dignity, reducing him to poverty in the end and to such a pathetic

state that, before he went mad, he wept over his foolishness and raged and howled at his terribly ungrateful children.

719.

When it comes to making the worst threats and accusations, the vast preponderance of talk on the world stage is hot air. However, the relatively small number of fires that flare up and burn is still sufficient to make it all seem lively and relevant. Occasionally, of course, it does end with an out-and-out conflagration.

720.

Evil may spring up under our very noses yet unbeknownst to us and with ourselves as its unwitting instigators. “Evil *will* spring up . . .”

721.

As pithy expressions that combine comprehensiveness with conciseness, it’s hard to beat “from the cradle to the grave” or “from the womb to the tomb.”

722.

What truth teller isn't in danger of being compromised as a public speaker if he becomes popular and has to keep an eye on the entertainment value of his talk?

723.

If truth were what we wanted throughout our lives and on every occasion, there would be no lying or being fooled by lies.

724.

One thing is certain: whatever subject one raises for discussion in the public arena, it will get its share of stupid as commentary and criticism. This doesn't change from generation to generation.

725.

Few things are more common than voicing a strong opinion

based on the desire not to be right but to be thought to be right.

726.

If one would like to know how secure one is in one's ideas and beliefs, one should imagine being before a tribunal or learned judge whose ideas and ways of thinking are diametrically opposed to one's own.

727.

When the father looks at the son or the mother looks at the daughter, he or she peers into the past as much as the future.

728.

It's much more likely that a hierarchy will reverse itself than than dissolve or dismiss itself.

729.

If one were to go by what has been officially said in modern times to justify military actions and campaigns, one would have to admit there has never been one not well-intentioned and even humanitarian at heart.

730.

Food for thought: The “plain meal” way of serving up knowledge can’t compete with the “haute cuisine” or “junk food” ways of doing it except over time.

731.

Of all the great rules of life, perhaps the most popular or prevalent is: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. Perhaps the second is: Tell the truth. And perhaps the third is: Do your best. On the other side of the ledger, there is the great principle of war which dictates that the first two be seriously altered or reinterpreted while the second read as, “Do your best by doing the worst to the enemy until your last

drop of blood!”

732.

The question for the future shouldn't be how to live longer but how to live *actively* longer.

733.

What makes large-scale lying so effective time and time again is that it gives people so much of what they want to hear.

744.

Any falling away from human perfection is someone's point of entry, if they are malicious, for mockery and ridicule. This is the crueller side of comedy.

745.

The world is so incredibly perfect that it allows even those who want to perfect it their day in the sun.

746.

He who runs with the crowd runs the risk of losing his head to the crowd.

747.

It should come as no surprise that, in politics where winning counts for so much, fairness to others can fly off at any time.

748.

Every generation that springs up into the world thinks it's something quite new whereas in fact it's part of something quite old.

749.

In the media everything that is different or divergent is put under a magnifying glass and, as far as the optics go, becomes mainstream.

750.

The great paradox of politics lies in the contrast between its ends and its means. The first often has the character of highest things, the second the lowest.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

751-800

751.

It's possible that, in the political sphere at least, liberal thought has opened itself up so much as to become narrow, that it has made being tolerant in some areas synonymous with being intolerant in others. If this is so, then it has opened up a vital contradiction in itself that makes it a prime target for what perhaps it itself strives to be nowadays, namely, a moral crusade.

752.

The problem with the common political epithets and slogans of the day is that, being bandied about day and night, they become like much-handled coins so worn they are virtually useless. At least, this is their fate unless some way is found to newly mint them.

753.

Propaganda is certainly efficient in one way and perhaps in one way alone: it convinces those who uphold only weakly a point of view or set of beliefs to join forces with those who uphold them strongly to form one “solid” front.

754.

If the objective of learning were to be as fair as possible in one’s judgment of a matter, then the whole would never be judged by the part, which of course is the common practice, but rather the part always by the whole, which involves great effort and is therefore rare.

755.

Partisan politics simplified: On one side, people overflowing with the milk of human kindness and on the other, rapacious devils. Or, on one side, egregious hypocrites and on the other, staunch defenders of time-honoured values.

756.

The art of journalism in the mainstream media is holding everyone and everything to account in the public arena except itself.

757.

Virtue's name can serve self-interest as well as vice and, in this way, become a vice.

758.

The hard perhaps unacceptable truth is that, if this magnificent world weren't a horrible place at least to some degree, it wouldn't interest us to the *highest* degree.

759.

Yes, it's true. The left in politics, generally speaking, puts a more human face on things. Without it, the attitude would forever be business as usual.

760.

Most people don't fear or hate the sin itself but rather the disclosure of it, the condemnation of it, the punishment of it, and, in some cases, the controversy surrounding it.

761.

Yes, I'm reading this great person's work. It's a bit sad to think he's forgotten it entirely. He doesn't remember even a word of it. Why, you ask? Why, quite simply, it's out of his mind because he's out of this world. Of course, that's all normal and natural but it's still a bit sad to think what he laboured so hard and so long over means nothing to him now.

762.

It's amazing the number of people on popular forums who think that heaping abuse on others wins their argument!

763.

The world is like a large pie. Everyone wants their piece of it. Indeed, some countries want a very large piece. It's in this context that world peace sets out on its impossible mission.

764.

The things that are given in life are probably the greatest blessings we will ever receive. And yet, for the simple reason they are given, we often treat them as if they were as cheap as air and water and as dispensable as dirt.

765.

Ad hominem arguments and personal attacks should always be considered a sign of weakness. However, given that they are often taken to be the opposite, namely, a sign of strength, and given they are often used by both skilled and unskilled speakers alike, one may ask: "What's going on? Why is this the case?" The answer must be that, in order to be perceived for what they are, namely, as a sign of weakness, the majority of

people would have to be what they are not, namely, full of patience, probity, and wisdom. Often it takes a great amount of time for them to get past old prejudices and be in accord with sound argument and objective findings.

766.

If it weren't for the fact that many famous and successful people are struck and sometimes struck down by scandal, many other people would never have the opportunity to think of themselves as being superior to, if only for a moment, the best and the brightest.

767.

For most of us, safety and security are what we want over the long haul. But when it comes to the hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute, second-by-second beat of life, the safe and secure cannot be entirely separated from what, like immense suffering, is absolutely intolerable, namely, immense boredom.

768.

When generalizations are treated as if they were as certain as particular observations, they are likely a product of poor as much as good reasoning.

769.

It's like a feeding frenzy among animals when people dispute over some moral or political issue. They will attack and tear away at their opponents and sometimes even their allies with all the ferocity that human beings are capable of this side of physical confrontation.

770.

What starts off as a matter of taste, preference, custom, or tradition (as would be the case, for example, if someone said: "I've always lived in the city and couldn't possibly live anywhere else!") eventually becomes moralized (as would be the case, for example, if this person said, "It's far better to live in the city and for a number of good reasons!") which in

turn eventually becomes politicized (as would be the case, for example, if this same person now said, “Everyone should and in fact must live as we do in the city or else!”)

771.

Politics can never be entirely removed from persecution, from injustice because it always falls short of being an entirely unanimous affair.

772.

Nietzsche said that all higher civilizations are founded on cruelty. This is an extreme claim only if their wealth isn’t founded on war.

773.

It’s not as difficult as one might think to put the armour of hardness about one’s heart. Pride, power, position, profit, practice – not to mention fear, anger, resentment, revenge, ignorance, and necessity – are all capable of doing this.

774.

Virtually everyone can be nice, pleasant, agreeable, and respectful in favourable circumstances. The real challenge is to be all these things (but perhaps not with all people for this would be asking too much) in unfavourable ones.

775.

Thinking for one's self means being suspicious of all public, popular, and professional opinion that treats the important points of a matter as if they were already decided and settled.

776.

It may be that way down deep in the religious or quasi-religious psyche, what is felt is both a duty and a desire not to think.

777.

When a politician or political commentator has a string of

accusations but no line of argument, he's not much better than a paid propagandist.

778.

At first you outlived your childhood and, well, that was okay, but it didn't get any easier. Then you outlived your adolescence and, well, that was okay, but it didn't get any easier. Then you outlived your youth and, well, that was okay, but it didn't get any easier. Then you outlived your middle and later years and, well, that was okay, but it didn't get any easier. Then you died and it finally became easier.

779.

When it comes to analysing moral problems in public, it's virtually impossible to do so without merely a semblance of being cold and objective. The reason for this is as simple to state as it's difficult to formulate into an acceptable principle. The general understanding is that we have both good and evil in the world, that these two are not only distinct but radically opposed, and that, even for analytical reasons, if one mixes or

confounds the two, one is not only making a mistake but doing evil or, at the very least, something close to it.

780.

When things, people, places, and events don't have any obvious or lasting effect on us, then it's likely they'll be washed down some memory hole from which they can only be retrieved, if they can be at all, with some extraordinary effort or special tool such as a written record.

781.

All who combine youth with perfect physical form belong to a minority of privileged god-like creatures who live and work among us and who, sadly enough, are destined to quit this role and this magnificent stage. But were it not so, how much envy might become murderous!

782.

When we are twenty or thereabouts, we often don't see our

future, at least with any anticipation or excitement, going much beyond the age of thirty or thirty-five. It's as if we were all so many Alexanders who, taking a view of what should happen in-between, see only one thing: a string of conquests.

783.

Melodrama with its hero on the one side and villain on the other has always been one of the most popular forms of narrative. It should not be surprising then that the media, being in the business of selling a product, puts its truth-telling in this form.

784

The present can be a rather sad time for those who've enjoyed past glory but, for some reason or other, outlived it. How much more so then, if such things can be quantified, for those who've always wanted to achieve great things but, even in their own eyes, failed to do so?

785.

One of the advantages of knowing how precarious life is for each and every one of us is that it then becomes difficult to be envious of anyone or at least more difficult than otherwise.

786.

Virtue practised but seldom preached will always have a more profound and lasting effect than virtue preached but seldom practised.

787.

Every individual is so indebted to society and the world at large for what they are as a human being that, if all humanity suddenly became aware of this, if it were suddenly stricken by this indebtedness that no one can escape and no one can think about except briefly or on the fly (apart from the deeply spiritual man or woman), egotism itself would be wiped out and most if not all functioning parts of society.

788.

The greatest insight one might ever have is that nothing has to be exactly the way it is and that everything and anything can change and even change dramatically. If anyone doubts this, let them think for a moment of the infinite variety of animals and plants in the world not only now but over millions of years.

789.

Being feminine and growing old means losing one's attractiveness, and being masculine and growing old means losing one's strength. But let's not fool ourselves one way or the other about these propositions (which go against the thinking of the times to some extent) for we're only talking about one kind of attractiveness and one kind of strength and nothing else.

790.

Replacing arguments with accusations is the quickest way to

go for those with an agenda.

791.

To think that much of what is now considered to be fresh, new, advanced, and ground-breaking will one day seem as dated as many things in the past. But of course this is not the usual attitude which is that what we have created, invented, thought anew, and taken pride in will go on forever, rising every day like a new sun.

792.

As much as we might condemn it, stupidity is entertaining if it doesn't affect us adversely.

793.

As much as we condemn it and we condemn it far more than stupidity, evil is entertaining (but who dares admit this?) if it doesn't affect us adversely or only up to a certain point.

794.

Human curiosity spans all limits except those that make us weary, uncomfortable, or frightened and sometimes it even exceeds them.

795.

To think that society will rid itself of hateful speech and acts while politics remains their privileged playground!

796.

Having good intentions but being dishonest is no better than having bad intentions but being honest.

797.

The will to power is such that what is not the norm but feels itself to be in the ascendancy will construe itself as the norm until it may in fact end up so.

798.

For those who are lucky, the mind is the strongest muscle in the body.

799.

Only information taken to heart yields changes or true commitment.

800.

If life weren't nuanced to the nth degree, what need would we have of poetry?

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

801-850

801.

When one is conservative, one runs the risk of being labeled insensitive. When liberal, insincere.

802.

Whatever is controversial or contended at the national and international levels usually plays itself out much more in word than deed. However, it's generally of a sufficiently rough and threatening nature that whatever ends up resorting to force on a grand scale is often hard to predict and on us before we know it.

803.

Politics is the art of publicly declaring one's virtues and the opponent's vices and then multiplying each tenfold.

804.

When a leader is surrounded by people telling him what he's doing is right while, in the eyes of many others, what he's doing is wrong, all their opposition to him, if it doesn't threaten the corridors of power, is mere background noise.

805.

Birth is messy, death is ugly and in-between it's trying to work it out not only for the best, but the brightest, the most beautiful, the most hopeful, the most exalted, the most intoxicating, the most adventurous, the most noble, the most just, the most . . .

806.

No matter what the principle or ideal, if driven to an extreme, it will end up being a caricature of itself.

807.

When large financial interests are at stake, moral principles suddenly have a way of becoming flexible and open to interpretation.

808.

Just as there is a collective morality that is essential to the largely non-material needs and interests of a community or country, so there is a collective *immorality* that cannot be distinguished from its material ones. The greatest evidence of this is the general approval given to launching a war that, though it be thinly disguised as moral and just, is bent on acquiring other people's lands and riches.

809.

Political commentary tends to degenerate on both sides of an ideological divide in such a manner that minor wrongs end up getting as much play as major ones.

810.

The great religions have operated and flourished by banning the values of the material world from their liturgies and devotions while smuggling them back in as empire-building. Institutionally and collectively speaking, heaven and mammon have always been yoked in practise while divorced in principle.

811.

The invaders came to the land but didn't put the people to the sword and some say this was humane. Others say it was simply the decision not to kill the cow but to milk it.

812.

In politics as elsewhere, having sharp eyes for injustice rarely goes without a matching myopia. Much depends on where one sits and what one's sensibilities are.

813.

It's certain that a thousand years from now, if humanity survives, very few people will care about the issues and events that we care about or claim to care about except those of the most general sort.

814.

Reasoning of a politician: If it serves the greater good, what do a few lies along the way matter?

815.

If we actually lived our youth as pure and wholesome as it often seems to be or is portrayed as being, few would live beyond it.

816.

The willingness of a person to criticize others is quite often a good indicator of his aversion to self-criticism.

817.

It seems that, to some extent or other, we all love to feel morally outraged at someone or something.

818.

In the matter of how we come to act as we do and be as we are, the roles and positions we assume in life play a far greater part than we care to admit.

819.

The easiest thing in the world is to adopt a moral position when there is both immediate and long-term gain. The hardest is when there is neither of these.

820.

Politics at its worst besides war *is* war: name-calling, treachery, deceitfulness, and throwing as much mud as one can. But, unfortunately for both politics and politicians, at

least insofar as their self-image is concerned, most people like to watch this.

821.

Truth is highly valued in politics when it makes up a winning hand. Its value soon drops when it doesn't.

822.

When the media becomes more propropagandistic than informative, it's a sure sign the political has become an important factor and is either in line with or superior to the profit motive.

823.

Every simplification is complicated as "local possibility" emanating from "global impossibility."

824.

You may grow old and, indeed, very old, but for all those who haven't seen or heard of you for many years, you died young.

825.

A pure life? An absolutely pure life? Yes, that's been imagined. How powerfully it's been imagined!

826.

A virtue that wants to shine so as to shame others ends up not only sinning but sullyng itself.

827.

Let's not fool ourselves! When it comes to war and, specifically, the killing of the enemy, losing one's humanity is not a thing condemned but rather excused and even honoured.

828.

A: Life's rough, no matter what we achieve.

B: You sound like someone at the end of a life and not somebody who's starting off.

A: Quite right, and no doubt my sentiment has been the swan song of a good many others.

829.

One should be careful what habits one cultivates in life. God knows what tyrants they can turn out to be!

830

In some instances, being a victim simply means adopting the moral high ground while undermining it with malice.

831.

The will to the greatest good and highest truths are forever collaborating and compromising so as not to impede each

other.

832.

The news media presents itself as being fair, balanced, and objective but in fact it's become superficial, selective, and slanderous, how much of its soul has it sold to gain the world?

833.

Every day we start over our life under conditions that, however routine, incrementally change and are never quite the same.

834.

Living from day-to-day is the greatest habit of all and, if it took an act of will to break it, we would live forever.

835.

Dying is much easier when living has become most difficult.

836.

It's a rather frightening thing that people who can be nicest can also be nastiest.

837.

Say all you want about politeness. Say all you want about political correctness. Say all you want about showing respect to others. None of this will, in the heat of the moment, prevent most people from losing it.

838.

Being a politician and an excellent speaker often mean being able to speak truthfully and falsely with equal conviction.

839.

Young love! When it's on, nothing surpasses it!

840.

Perhaps no public or political discourse is more frequently dishonest than the one of assessing the enemy.

841.

Party politics falls short of being principled whenever it must be tactical or strategic which is most of the time.

842.

When a politician keeps on making the same point over and over, there is the risk that, no matter how well received it is, he will still sound like a politician.

843.

A: I don't understand myself and I don't understand the world.

B: But you've lived a long life.

A: Let me rephrase that. I understand neither myself nor the world completely.

B: But how could it be otherwise?

A: Well, I can dream, can't I?

844.

A: It's a sort of blasphemy to say it but evil makes the world more exciting and interesting.

B: Perhaps for those who don't suffer from it. Who even enjoy the suffering of others. Goddamn it, what're you saying?

A: I'm sorry, did I offend you?

B: As a rape victim, I should be offended!

A: You're perfectly right. My truth isn't for all ears.

845.

Why is romantic love both so sweet and so bitter? Because it's the idealization of the other who must eventually fall short.

846.

Perhaps the greatest folly of youth is its transience. It should

have enough sense to stay where it is.

847.

Perhaps one of the greatest benefits of age is having time to ponder one's youth which is something one didn't have when one lived it.

848.

The paradox of militarism is that the pomp and pride of the parade square blind everyone to the pathos and horror of war not once but over and over.

849.

With respect to the mores of a particular society, especially one of most recent vintage, there is always a gap between the public discourse about them and the way they are received by people in general. It is the lag or play in this area that, along with a multitude of factors, allows things to go

down a particular path of development or slow down, stop, and even be reversed. In relation to a variety of conditions and circumstances, these two possibilities can lead to two others, namely, all moral change or development flowing about us like a meandering river or hitting us like a flash flood.

850

There will never be a change in the way we do politics unless there is a corresponding change in society. It boils down to the fact that politicians will never stop lying to us until we become far more unwilling to accept, promote, believe, parrot, celebrate, and welcome them.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

851-900

851.

Are there times you feel like running away from it all? Well, wait long enough, and that moment of escape will come. It's guaranteed.

852.

Most people are not so much ashamed of having dirty thoughts and habits as having them found out and, what's worse, *spelled* out.

853.

***Suum cuique* : When it comes to comparing one's worth and capabilities to others, context is everything.**

854.

When a TV journalist or commentator is forced to keep one eye on the ratings and the other on giving honest coverage, he's bound to become a bit cross-eyed.

855.

Thank God for being at least a trifle vain in all those areas we do well in! For how else could we suffer all those areas in which we do badly?

856.

If we were wholly aware of how much we're influenced by the those around us, particularly those in the majority, we would perhaps lose all faith in a free will.

857.

It's a common enough view that, morally speaking, we have the appropriate values and sensibilities not only for now but

for all time.

858.

An aphorism never wills itself to come into being but only to come into being *well*.

859.

When we speak of the truth or, more properly, what we consider to be the truth, we can be caught up in things that could be just as easily associated with falsehood: fear, love, hate, ignorance, pride, and so on.

860.

Truth or, to be more precise, what is called the truth at any particular time is valuable not by virtue of its lasting forever but by virtue of its being widely accepted as such.

861.

Anything we see in the world that speaks of organization and technology, no matter how vast and complicated, is but an extension of what is to be found already in language, namely, its technical, organized nature.

862.

Organization and technology are new languages carried over into and developed in the physical realm.

863.

Language is plugged into the existing order. Change the order and you change the language (or vice-versa).

864.

When a despot's dominant idea fails, he falls.

865.

There are extraordinary people who, in ordinary circumstances, seem rather ordinary. There are also people who, in extraordinary circumstances, make us ashamed to think we had ever considered them to be ordinary.

866.

Health, a good reputation, and financial security may not be enough to satisfy us but, if we lose them, we lose everything.

867.

There is this saying: From the sublime to the ridiculous. What better way to describe sexual love as it goes from innocence to act, from the star-crossed lovers of *Romeo and Juliet* to the beast of two backs in *Othello*!

868.

Any issue that is less than a life-and-death matter is

guaranteed to burn itself out and leave a future generation wondering what the fuss was all about.

869.

What makes bearable wearing an old and ugly face is the memory of the younger one one thinks one still has somehow.

870.

All thought, memory, and language are a constant retrieval of the past that allows the present to be as it is.

871.

Perhaps it should come as no surprise that a number of people who are mediocrities in most ways end up with a show of moral superiority as *their* way.

872.

Look at this great nation! While ever more refined in its moral sensibilities, its foreign policy is dropping ever more bombs. While there are many who no doubt see a problem here, there also many who probably take a fatalistic view of things and secretly think: “*Après moi, le déluge.*”

873.

From the point of view of what yields the most profit or gets immediate political results, morality is not geared toward the sensible but the sensationalistic.

874.

For only a select few does getting the whole truth and nothing but the truth matter. For the rest, whatever is said by one or more recognized authorities is generally sufficient.

875.

Everything has its season except mother love.

876.

The only time we become truly aware of how much each and every one of us is a born imitator is when a new habit or fashion springs up that, for some reason, doesn't take us in.

877.

Social, political, and economic pressures being what they are, there are more than a few people who can either change their colours like a chameleon or point true north on the moral compass of self-interest.

878.

A fair face can go far and even without lies lead us up the garden path.

879.

The loveliness of spring and summer faithfully return but, alas, not the love of yesteryear.

880.

The great advantage of writing fantasy nowadays is that it can be politically correct without being unprofitable.

881.

A certain amount of success stiffens resolve, too much slackens it.

882.

Generally speaking, if one wants to be happy in one's career as a great writer, artist, or thinker, one should envision having increasing degrees of success rather than starting off with a major one that can never be matched.

883.

Some are keen observers of the outside world, some of other people's thoughts and opinions, some of the latest trends and fashions, and some of their very own thoughts and feelings. If all these come together, then it's likely that, with hard work and favourable circumstances, a great writer or artist is born.

884.

The person who leads a virtuous life but says little about it makes a stronger impression than the one who merely talks about it. Unlike the latter, the former doesn't raise the suspicion that he may be an empty vessel.

885.

Life may seem ordinary a good deal of the time but even then it's still deeper than anything that might try to get to the bottom of it.

886.

In the poem, *The Second Coming*, the line “Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold, mere anarchy is loosed upon the world” could be imagined as referring to a switch for gravity the devil can turn off.

887.

What is language, any language if not the longest running project in human history, pre-history, and beyond?

888.

So much of what we say or do is groupthink. It takes an exceptional action or event, sometimes called genius, to break us out of this.

889.

For a careful thinker and observer, it's always surprising to see how many people are willing to draw conclusions based

on limited information and questionable sources. It's almost as if they were afraid of being robbed of whatever authority they have by not showing themselves to be absolutely certain.

890.

If there wasn't groupthink, there would be no order. If there were nothing but it, there would be no progress.

891.

The modern-day ethic of keeping people alive as long as possible would surely end if a scarcity of resources became so acute as to lead to certain revisions in our moral thinking.

892.

A: Have you noticed how many people there are nowadays who, while staring at their smartphones, cross the street like zombies? Is this a sign of the Brave New World?

B: Well, if so, it's all in the technology. The rest leaves something to be desired.

893.

When not focussed on some task or other, the mind is no more in our control than the weather.

894.

How could anyone's ego, no matter how big, hold up very long if one took the world to be a colossus coming at it from all angles?

895.

Moral principles, no matter what they may be, have always resisted serious investigation (as amoral or objective study) by making it immoral even to consider this possibility.

896.

The dead play a vital role in the lives of the living, both materially and spiritually speaking. Indeed, the debt is so overwhelming that, were it not for the monuments and rituals, it would be written off and forgotten.

897.

Technical knowledge and skill can be compared to a second language that one learns, be it driving a car, working on a computer, or playing a musical instrument.

898.

As a swarm of busy flies to a dunghill are we to the earth; it nourishes us as creatures important first and foremost to ourselves.

899.

The cornucopia of collective knowledge: While one may very

well know more than anyone else in one particular area, there are at least a million others where, in each, millions of people know more.

900.

Familiarity! Familiarity! If we exceed the dosage, we get bored. If we don't get enough, the signs range from mild discomfort to madness.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

901-950

901.

How many times do we read about people who win fame and fortune – those whom we often envy and would like to emulate – but who, in later years, lose, if not their fame and fortune, health and happiness? How many times must we read such accounts not to believe that, at least in this life, everything comes with a price and that, in some sense or other, such people often sacrifice one or two things that should definitely be called blessings to get what, as it seems, the whole world wants?

902.

Common expressions and clichés communicate quickly. What they don't do is communicate deeply and quite often not even carefully or conscientiously.

903.

Half of being considerate of others is being considerate of ourselves. The pain we wish to avoid giving others or the pain we give them but wish to mitigate runs parallel to what we wish to avoid or lessen in ourselves, namely, a bad conscience.

904.

What is always striking about a goodly number of people with completely opposed political views is how much they resemble each other in hate.

905.

The quickest and harshest way to impugn a person's character, living or dead, is to do what would be the case if it were their body that was singled out for opprobrium. The way to brand them with ignominy and put them beyond redemption then would be to force them to undergo a physical examination, declare publicly in a suitably shocked and

outraged voice they had an anus, and make sure no other features, especially the most inoffensive or attractive ones, were given the slightest attention.

906.

What is it with the sex life of at least a certain number of men at a certain period of their lives? It seems to be, on the one hand, being too ashamed to admit they don't get enough and, on the other, being too ashamed to admit they sometimes get it or at least want to get it in the wrong places.

907.

If hating in and of itself were a crime, none but new-born babes would escape censure.

908.

Suppose the whole world loved you but there was one person, known to you, who hated you with a passion. Would this not be like a pebble in your shoe knowing that, being far from perfect,

you might have given him reason to feel the way he does?

909.

What is life, pessimistically viewed? A long drop from one's best form. What is life, optimistically viewed? A long drop from one's best form but with this "best" being the guide and model for the rest.

910.

Why is it that some people who have been treated so well by others, who have been shown extraordinary generosity and magnanimity, end up returning all this not only with ingratitude but scorn? The answer seems to be, sadly enough, that they want to get out of a debt they know they can never pay off.

911.

Where big money is to be made, the less than honest is to be played, and the soul-snatching devil to be paid.

912.

If it weren't for all the foolishness in the world, half of what interests us would be left out.

913.

If ever there were a human being capable of being grateful for everything in the world, both positive and negative, he would come close to being like the Old Testament god who, after the sixth day, "saw everything that he had made and, behold, it was very good."

914

MORALIST A: All you're doing is trafficking in clichés, which are here today, gone tomorrow. Although I do admit, they are powerful enough to satisfy the majority.

MORALIST B: And you?

MORALIST A: I'm obviously not one of the majority and so of little use to the present.

MORALIST B: And the future?

MORALIST A: Perhaps.

915.

A: Look at that human wreck over there who, even though he gets all his basic needs taken care of, goes out every day to panhandle from nine to five!

B: He must want to keep busy somehow.

A: Yes, you have to admire his ambition.

916.

The good will that exists day-to-day, even in politics, far surpasses ill will because, without it, the daily round would be a ring of fire.

917.

From an embittered lover to the beloved who no longer answers him: "Thanks for treating me as if I were dead! That's something you'll have to take to the grave!"

918.

Imagine lying comfortably in bed at night, without a worrisome thought, when all of a sudden an object falls out of the sky, crashes into your home, and kills you. Imagine how frightening and unexpected! How swift an ending! And yet, however unlikely this may be, millions of people do get killed in ways similar to this.

919.

Let us imagine that worlds and civilizations are destroyed over and over again. A corollary to this would be they are born over and over again and, if not on this planet, then another.

920.

Vanity is like a vacuum. It will suck up whatever it can, however meagre this might be, if not in one's own eyes then in others, to inflate the ego a bit bigger than it was a moment before.

921.

Between the ages of twenty and forty there exists a certain grace period in one's life during which one is usually not taxed with being either too young and inexperienced or too old and out of touch.

922.

Gold fever! An apt metaphor for the way many are stricken who, having the odds stacked against them and despite hardship, heartache, and countless setbacks and disappointments, still believe the heavens will one day smile upon them and lead them to their El Dorado.

923.

The trouble with bad habits picked up in youth is that, even if many of them are innocent enough, they don't stay that way for very long.

924.

Without nature, humanity would be thoroughly deprived since it would only have itself to look at for signs of divinity.

925.

Make no mistake! Without the laws and rules that govern our behaviour, we'd all be sea monsters.

926.

Take the type of person you honour and admire the most, populate the world with him, and you'd no longer have a world. For without opposites and everything in between, there would be no evaluations and, without them, no judgement, no discernment, no way of conceiving a world and everything that makes up one.

927.

One symbol of a couple in today's world might be they're

being happily together out in public but on their cell phones.

928.

Both the glorification and debasement of so much we call our highest interests means they can never be more than a coupling between imperfect means and a giving birth to imperfect ends.

929.

Most people are so busy aligning their thought with others they've no time for other thought.

930.

Think of how many strange things there are on the ocean floor. And then think of how it would be if everything in the world suddenly became as strange and unfamiliar as them. Would it be possible we could ever have anything called knowledge or at least knowledge significantly different from what other creatures have?

931.

The fickleness of fate is such that, while many work and struggle all their lives to make their mark, a few do it with little or no effort at a ridiculously young age.

932.

And to think that a glandular secretion and something resembling mutual masturbation underlie it!

933.

If there is any doubt that alcohol makes stupid, seeing a famous writer pissed to the gills on some talk show will quickly dispel it.

934.

If one had to set the best example of one preached before anything was put into practise, how few great enterprises would get off the ground, be they good or bad, so much do

things fall short of promises made about them.

935.

Were it not for the fact that the vast majority of people are nice to each other in the day-to-day, this brutal world would be unbearable.

936.

Activities of a highly competitive or war-like nature such as politics never value honesty and openness beyond what is necessary to win. The corollary is that their opposites are never far from the field.

937.

If one happens to have a weak head but a warm heart, then it's likely the second will give the best direction in life.

938.

It's unfortunate that, even in a friendship of long duration, one disagreeable or unpleasant moment can undo it.

939.

The daily news is a constant effort to give a full disclosure of the partially known.

940.

Although every generation is unique, it's never as unique as it takes itself to be.

941.

Every generation thinks of itself as being virtuous even in its vices. Hence it is that hordes of young people are quick to get out on the street to make a better world by, among other things, destroying property.

942.

Semi-poetic thought: Although the day is brown and grey with winter on the way, those people are having fun in play because they're young and have the day.

943.

A proven formula for generating mass persuasion if not hysteria is a highly selective use of information, a show of authority, emotional rhetoric, and frequent repetition.

944.

As a factor contributing to the preservation and well-being of society, the self-monitoring and self-censoring of the sexual has no doubt been underestimated.

945.

However important belonging to a certain group might be to us, it's probably less important than simply belonging to

one.

946.

There are many people who would have virtually nothing to say if they couldn't praise something to the high heaven or else criticize it without mercy.

947.

When a scientist or scholar snarls at or viciously attacks some intellectual interloper who enters his field of study and even challenges some of its principles, he's taking an atavistic plunge back not only to his territorially-minded ancestors but his animal origins.

948.

Reverse optics: In the public domain, hypocrisy, hyperbole, humiliation, and hate are rampant. We should be thankful for the private then which allows the first to be, generally speaking, tolerable.

949.

The slogan of yesteryear was “Feed the hungry!” The slogan of today is “Save the planet!” As long as the first represents a large-scale problem not resolved but put out of sight, the second remains a dubious proposition.

950.

Only morality can make the mass of people think themselves superior to the masses – if not those of today then those of yesteryear.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

951 - 1000

951.

Talking about one's various aches and pains as if this made for interesting and engaging conversation is a sure sign of getting on – and then some.

952.

One day, at the water hole, the crocodile strikes. The victim is viciously hauled into the water, torn apart, and then swallowed. And yet for the victim, it started off as just one more day at the water hole.

953.

If we allow that every human being who has ever existed has made his contribution great or small to creating society and civilization as a whole, then why not allow the same for all other

living creatures as mini-creators and mini-participants of this world?

954.

Made up of a great many wise and foolish things, the past comes to us both as what is to be challenged and surpassed and listened to and learnt from.

955.

One can avoid being biased in one's comments and opinions by giving equal time and attention to the two, three, or four sides of a matter. In principle, then, the answer is simple. In practise, however, it's as difficult as learning two, three, or four languages.

956.

As long as there is this conversation about human rights and equality, many people will find themselves haunted by their second-rate status, whether it be on the level of the social and

economic or the moral and political. In other words, many of the oppressed will find themselves wanting to be more like the oppressors on the first level and vice-versa on the second.

957.

Promulgating an ideal, unlike promoting most ideas, runs the risk of taking things from the very high to the very low.

958.

How discomforting, disorienting, and even demoralizing to be forced off the beaten path but also potentially enriching and enlightening!

959.

Mediocre minds take their revenge on the great minds of the past by viewing them through the lens of moral superiority.

960.

Everything is political, some people say, but if all human effort went into defending some principle or fighting for some cause rather than finding out the truth of a matter, the former would be reduced to being a power without vision, a force without reflection, an effort without endurance or lasting elevation. Everything is political then only insofar as it regularly yields to the non-political.

961.

Here is a possible announcement by the future ecological masters of the planet: “Join us in celebrating Mass Human Extermination Day! It’s a collective event you’ll never remember!”

962.

An aphorism is like a poem in that, if one doesn’t like it, one shouldn’t argue with it but simply ignore it.

963.

Yes, diversity is a wonderful thing but, as ideology, it can also do a wonderful job of stamping it out.

964.

There are fools on the internet nowadays who, like errant mischievous birds landing on a post or statue, visit some comments section and, thinking they're being clever, leave a few droppings.

966.

A general malaise concerning not only the government but its form or structure gives demagoguery its best chance.

967.

Due to a lack of time, energy, and interest, most of us will listen to the news story we like innumerable times before finding out if there's another side to it.

968.

Injustice done in the name of justice has always been and forever will be a problem for morality. It leaves its trace in what was once highly respectable but then is suddenly despised and disowned.

969.

Difference, as we all know, cuts both ways, bringing not only delight but dissension.

970.

It's well known that recognized experts often disagree. How is it then that so many people make their point as if it were settled science?

971.

Perhaps one of the hardest thoughts to wrap one's head around is the idea that all beauty, truth, goodness, love, and so on

depend not only on the existence of their opposites but everything that falls short of them.

972.

In later years one's closer to one's youth than anyone else in the way of remembering it but further away from it in many other ways.

973.

If the colonialism of yesteryear is to be condemned for using moral hypocrisy and racism to justify dominating and exploiting other peoples, so the imperialism of today should be condemned for cultivating the first of these almost to perfection.

974.

It's a question whether, when some expert claims that this or that is but a myth and not the truth of the matter, he himself is not constructing a myth. Were it otherwise, he would not only have to claim he knows the truth of the matter but be able to

assert it forever.

975

What is largely an illusion we have about people who are extremely well spoken and live their lives in grand style (but this is certainly dispelled by such works as *Remembrance of Things Past*) is the *trompe l'oeil* of their social graces which gives the impression they are free of the pettiness and spite that afflict us.

976.

The humanitarian aim or ideal, as a great searching beacon of light, tends to weaken drastically if not go out completely when it must shine towards those peoples and places not in line with certain vested interests.

977.

The high-born Roman women watched the gladiators fight it out to the end and, like the men, cheered in their hearts at the thumbs up or thumbs down.

978.

Transfers from our prenatal past form our memory as much as if not more than personal experience.

979.

Political correctness or “wokeness,” as it’s often called today, could be described as pushing all opposing or conflicting views off the table and perhaps even upsetting it in order to serve the greater mission of what is, to put it mildly, a tall order and, to put it bluntly, megalomania. Demanding social justice for all, a supremely conscientious stewardship of the planet, and a both highly compassionate and equitable treatment of all the creatures on it is a noble cause fit for nothing less than gods or, to be more precise, supreme beings of the highest order who would resemble the gods of ancient Greece in everything except their cruel, violent ways, licentious behaviour, and ongoing rivalry.

980.

There is obesity to the point of obscenity and whoever is afflicted with it makes for a sad case and a sad sight.

981.

The current controversy surrounding climate change, which is every bit as much a dogfight as it is a debate, is engendered by a number of scientific views and positions being yoked to two different moral imperatives. One of these imperatives is doing good at all costs and the other is telling the truth above everything else. There is no more possibility of a reconciliation between these two than of one being eradicated by the other. (It goes without saying they can interact with or be implicated in each other.) Rather, the most that can be expected – and this in concert with a multitude of ongoing events – is an ongoing struggle intermixed with periods of negotiation and compromise, each of them leading to an uneasy but no less welcome truce.

982.

How many of our guiding principles or ideas turn out to be illusions by falling short of the ideals they once were?

983.

Many people are full of resentment because of all that's come between them and what they once desired and imagined for themselves.

984.

What is toxic to the building of a perfect society is already there at the beginning: imperfect means and materials.

985.

A: When I talk with somebody on the left, I feel like I'm on the right. And when I talk with somebody on the right, I feel like I'm on the left.

B: And why do you think this is?

A: Their dogmatic assertions! It's enough to make anyone grind their teeth.

986.

Radically opposing ideologies become indistinguishable from each other in their certainty of their rightness, in their combativeness, in their hatred of the other side, and in their will to power.

987.

Packaging intellectual property for the purpose of promoting it can often be underplayed and so its importance underestimated.

988.

Our hunger for news, good or bad, is testimony to the immoral or amoral side of our curiosity.

989.

One definition of stupidity, perhaps universal in its scope, is thinking one knows more about a subject than one actually does and then sharing this knowledge with others as if nothing were more certain than the educational benefits thereby derived.

990.

A: Helping people? What? With the truth? By giving the bare facts, whatever they may be? Why not with illusion? With falsehood? There's no easy answer to this question.

B: But generally speaking . . .

991.

A: Do you agree with me that anything can be faked, acted out, and sometimes almost to perfection? I'm waiting for your answer.

B: Stop faking and acting out yourself.

A: You're right. It can't be proven otherwise. Thank you.

He wrote a beautiful book that charmed, delighted, excited, astounded, and inspired people. It was of course an instant hit and made him famous. Then he was accused of some highly inappropriate behaviour. The case against him was not conclusive but, irrespective of this and whether or not he suffered punishment as a consequence, an old story emerges here, both partly sad and partly sordid: the one of confusing the creator with his work and, as a consequence, demanding that his most private thoughts and deeds correspond if not conform completely with his highest ones. When this doesn't happen, when for whatever reason the disapproving gaze upon him doesn't falter or abate and stop seeing the taint, then it's as if the human all too human were reasserting itself as the destroyer of all illusions. At the same time, paradoxically enough, it proves to be the upholder of something that's no illusion, namely, the super-human insofar as the latter are moments of a person's life that have been thrown into relief, moments full of uncommon energy, daring, and creativity, moments, finally, that cannot be faked.

993.

Sensationalized reporting isn't necessarily unreliable but it's always in danger of becoming so.

994.

Finding out the truth of a matter by relying more on ourselves than others is not something most of us can do unless it's a matter of livelihood.

995.

How difficult and complicated things are! At least, if one takes the long-term view. A book that sets out to expose a fraud may itself turn out to be one. And whatever sets out to expose this second may itself turn out to be – you see! There's no end to this sort of thing. But to speak to all sides of the matter, there are issues that simply exhaust themselves. What comes to an end are not so much the means and possibilities of pushing a matter further but rather the matter itself as object of interest.

996.

Confession: Apart from a few, all-too-brief occasions, I've lived my whole life without having tasted the fruits of the female mind and body to the very limits of my most romantic longings and voluptuous desires. At the same time, I realize that I've lived something else to the greatest possible extent and that this something else, call it an intellectual or spiritual life, wouldn't have happened if there hadn't been discomfort and perturbation. The oyster that forms the pearl from the proverbial grain of sand provides an image to characterize this dilemma. However extravagant this image may be, it's certainly better than seeing my life as one long series of highly erotic but low-grade encounters with the opposite sex. It's words like "pornographic" and "prostitute," no doubt, I wish to avoid here.

997.

Under certain circumstances, calling someone boy or grandpa can be every bit as offensive as calling him weak, ineffectual, or something worse. On the other hand, stigmatizing a word as part of some widespread social anxiety and without regard to any other context, no matter how strict or specific, reveals the sort

of stupidity that future generations no doubt will scorn.

998.

Every creature, great or small, is a world unto itself. Only in this way could there be the immense coordination which constitutes the larger world and which is not perfect, not machine-like, not immaculate being but rather something much greater.

999.

It's often not easy to die, but it's always easy to be the equivalent of the unborn or pre-born.

1000.

Death is miracle reduced to material.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

1001-1050

1001.

Life is material turned everyday miracle.

1002.

The prey is the carnivore's way of getting to the herbs of the field.

1003.

A: Suppose the stars, which are so distant from us, are from another perspective all very close. And suppose there are worlds within worlds. If all this is the case, as it could very well be, then everything that's closest to us is a sort of grand illusion and even our worst sufferings and greatest problems much less significant than we take them to be.

B: All I know is what you're saying couldn't be thought, if at all, except by those who've never suffered the worst or come close to suffering it.

A: Well, even if that's true, does it make what I'm saying any less worth considering?

B: No, but it makes it absolutely worthless to all those who've suffered a lot more than you and for good reason.

A: You're perfectly right. It's rubbish to them which leads me to conclude that truth must forever be divided with each person matching it to the good and bad they best understand and for good reason.

1004.

Wherever there are questions about what is good for this or that or here or there, don't expect truth to show up whole and undivided.

1005.

Mediocre teachers become dangerous when they replace modesty with a sense of moral superiority. God only knows what

monsters they can breed or become!

1006.

These are the words of comfort I offer myself in the face of not having succeeded as well as others but which they themselves might view as sour grapes: “It must be sensational to sell but something else to stick around.”

1007.

The fate of Atlantis revisited: In envisioning an ideal world, we moderns may be deluding ourselves by thinking that, by reversing the position and perspective of the ancients, we somehow surpass them. For them, the actualization of the perfect world precedes its being inhabited by perfectly constituted beings. We, on the other hand, envisage the actualization of, if not perfect beings, something close to it in the form of supremely conscientious members of society who pave the way for increasingly better conditions on Earth. In the first case, it is understood that viewing ourselves as gods is not only foolish but also dangerous. In the second, it is assumed that this piece of

wisdom is antiquated.

1008.

Rest assured that, whenever there is a public debate over a highly divisive issue, there will be more than a few crazy things said on both sides that no faction or party will point out about itself.

1009.

Life is more kind to us than we think, for if it simply bore gifts and glad tidings, if it didn't make heavy demands on us, there would be no story about us worth telling or listening to except what a god might interest himself in.

1010.

Many people shine in their ignorance because they want to shine despite their ignorance.

1011.

When we give children mediocre books to read simply because they're inoffensive, we poorly equip them for later life where they may very well have to deal with things not only offensive but dangerous and destructive.

1012.

Let us imagine someone who has lived long past the time he won fame and fortune in his youth. As the years go by and memories fade, would he not increasingly resemble someone who had never lived such a life but only imagined it?

1013.

Only people who are relatively safe and secure have time and energy for phantom-like problems.

1014.

Evil done in the name of good should warn us all of, among other

things, its “non-critical” nature.

1015.

Despite everything that can be said against them, lies and deception (which take their most benign form in popular stories and myths) will never fall out of favour as long as they can help people forget their routine, unexciting, and careworn lives.

1016.

When we argue with someone over a controversial issue, it's easy to forget they have come to their conclusions on the basis of knowledge or information not identical to our own. On the other hand, assuming this knowledge or information, whatever it may be, to be less solid or convincing than our own is the default position of many of us.

1017.

He who argues for the eradication of all social hierarchies must contend with the fact that argumentation itself is putting one

position above another. Surely then he will have to weaken his if there's any chance of strengthening it.

1018.

Imagine a scholar whose life's work is threatened by some new theory or paradigm. Will he go gentle into that good night? No, he'll likely rage, rage against the dying of the light.

1019.

It should never be forgotten (but perhaps always forgiven) that an absolute genius in one area can be a complete imbecile in another.

1020.

When experts, especially those who are public figures, extend their conversation beyond a relatively narrow range of interests, they inevitably go beyond what first qualified them as experts.

1021.

**One way to start off a winning story with an extra kick would be:
“So-and-so was a raving success, but he did a lot of shit.”**

1022.

**Few arguments are original and therefore, when using them, our
main concern is to be on the right side with the winning team.**

1023.

**A person who is inclined to the contemplative life cannot put up
with the company of others too long for it tends to get between
him and himself. What is a pleasurable distraction for others is
for him often irksome and tiresome. He does not want to lose
himself in the crowd since he already feels a crowd within
himself. For better or worse, it's this myriad of elements
inhabiting all parts of his psyche that call to him most strongly.**

1024.

A city person who goes to live in the country and puts on airs will no doubt meet with ridicule. Similarly, a country person who goes to live in the city and continues to act as if he were in the country will meet with scorn. Here we have a clear division which, although not overtly moral or political, lays the basis for one.

1025.

If making everyone equal means lowering standards instead of raising as many as possible to a higher standard, then surely we're dealing with a principle that must become either a parody of itself or, perhaps the same thing, a poor man's paradise.

1026.

Politicians and political activists who go out of their way to offend large segments of the population are, to say the least, taking a big risk.

1027.

One of the biggest and most boneheaded mistakes is to assume that all members of an identifiable group should have the same idea of who and what they are.

1028.

Absolute purity is unattainable in life but striving to get it in some form or other is common enough.

1029.

The biggest difference between science at the purely theoretical or experimental level and at the popular level is that the “this might or must be the way it is” becomes simply “this is the way it is.”

1030.

In order to influence the general public, both politicians and the media count on a large number of people drawing from them as

their one source of information.

1031.

A civilization that is hundreds if not thousands of years old can be undone either by slow degrees or in an instant.

1032.

Corruption in human affairs should come as no surprise because its very nature is to come without warning, incrementally, on cat's paws.

1033.

Our thinking is forever limited not only on account of all that's unknown about the past but also the future.

1034.

There are no final answers but only those that claim to be. Of

course, this doesn't prevent them from being belief systems that, although limited, can eventually be replaced.

1035.

Being embraced by a political party as a sympathetic outsider carries with it the risk of, at least with respect to integrity, no longer wishing to be on the outside.

1036.

There are some public figures who, formerly celebrated but then seeing their popularity slip away, try to increase it by playing upon and promoting a popular prejudice. Truly they have joined the ranks of those who belong to the oldest profession.

1037.

There are many things that start off as grand projects but end up failing. However, if such undertakings didn't begin with at least the hope of success, all pushing beyond the bounds of the ordinary and giving an opportunity for something new to develop

would never see the light of day.

1038.

Competition generates interest with a form that transcends content. The game-like and the war-like can pitch a tent and happily share it while selling their wares.

1039.

“Man is a wolf,” said one. “Man is a sheep,” said another. “Man is a wolf in sheep’s clothing,” said a third. “No, man is a sheep in wolf’s clothing,” said a fourth. “A sheep in wolf’s clothing!” protested the third. “What does that mean?” “Not much,” answered the fourth, “except that a certain play of words can make it sound as if one’s said something.” “So, in fact,” insisted the third, “you’ve said nothing.” On the contrary,” responded the fourth, “I think I’ve said a great deal.”

1040.

While the great limitation of philosophy in the university is that

it's part of the rat race, its great distinction is its being the most self-questioning part.

1041.

Without massive diversity that overrides all contrary effects, there would be no equivalent array of opportunities and possibilities that arise from interactive elements both so great and small as to merge with the unobservable.

1042.

When we buy into life, we buy into everything. A blue sky, for example, that could always turn red or black.

1043.

Among cell phone users, there is this noticeable tendency to be on top of calls as if expecting one from a great benefactor.

1044.

It's strange to think how many projects done under the pressure of time now stand before us as unhurried as the pyramids.

1045.

Generally speaking, foolishness is bad but, if one needs a diversion, not being indifferent to it speaks in its favour.

1046.

A: Brother, let me tell you something. If I had to count up all the bad things I've done in my life and line them up, I'd disown myself. You think I'm exaggerating? Well, let me tell you I've done everything from the foolish to the vulgar to the perverted and even to the criminal. Now, what do you say?

B: Brother, if I were to say I was shocked, I would first have to ask myself: "Why am I shocked? Is it because of what he has done in his life or his frankness in saying it?" Then, if I were inclined to judge you, I would first have to do an inventory of all the bad things I've done in my life. If it came close to being like

yours, then perhaps all I could do would be to join you with a similar act of self-condemnation.

A: Brother, that's one of the most honest answers one's likely to get this side of childhood or sainthood.

1047.

"How the mighty have fallen!" is an old saying that's stood the test of time. It would be wise to keep it in mind while watching various leaders strut about on the world stage.

1048.

In principle, all nations refrain from warfare except when it's a case of self-defense. In practise, all nations engage in it whenever it suits their interests.

1049.

At virtually all levels of political discourse, slandering the enemy is a common practise and, indeed, no more so than when it's done on a grand scale. Surely this wouldn't be the case were it

not for the fact that it's a principle implicitly approved of in practise while being a practise explicitly disapproved of in principle.

1050.

In politics, when there are no arguments or evidence to use against an enemy, unsupported accusations will do. They will be deployed with the same good conscience that normally goes with doing lesser wrongs in secret.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

1051-1100

1051.

The longer we live, the older become our earliest memories. In this way, youth becomes attached to age or, more properly, to another age.

1052.

On the great chessboard of international affairs, moves are often made illegally and with highly injurious if not catastrophic consequences. The mindset of the political and military leaders can be summed up in one word: endgame. What is to be won and how to win it take precedence over all but the most humane or inhumane considerations.

1053.

On the international stage, it's common practise for a belligerent

to keep up appearances on the moral level by being proactive.

1054.

In most public discourses, what's necessary above all else is to fill the void. Small wonder then that even the wisest and most intelligent of speakers don't always have enlightening things to say. Keeping silent as response is the wisdom implicitly ruled out.

1055.

The grace and beauty of the past is to be with us without demanding any more attention than we care to give it.

1056.

If riches and resources are infinite, then lack of them is significant only at the local level. But, of course, in relation to the universe, the latter could easily be the world.

1057.

Here's a politician, one of the very few, who always speaks his mind. Consequently, he's had little or no success, never having learned the trick of making big promises or telling at least a few well-placed lies.

1058.

If a mediocre mind wants to put on a big show, moral superiority is the only way to go.

1059.

If the scientists of today want to act like politicians or political activists, they should get rid of all proxies. Entering the public arena as knowledge seekers directly in touch with their data, they would enlarge their influence greatly by posing as concerned citizens willing to put their money where their mouth is.

1060.

If science isn't free of error, what's it likely to be when it mixes with politics?

1061.

A: I'm sorry, but after two years, I still don't understand the enmity that exists between you and your former friend and business partner.

B: Well, I've said it often enough, haven't I? He's a scoundrel.

A: Yes, but an accusation isn't an argument, no matter how many times it's made. And, furthermore, doing so without arguments is exactly what politicians do. I think that says enough.

1062.

Yes, he's a controversial and intrepid figure when it comes to fighting against the policies of his political adversaries. But when it comes to those of his party or his political allies, he dare not be.

1063.

Those who reject religion and seek salvation in science don't seem to realize that, in the face of the uncertain, the second can also develop into a priesthood with articles of faith.

1064.

Eternity is the beginning and end of particular things in indivisible procession.

1065.

If the world is doomed, who will deny that only a good lie will save us?

1066.

News reporting is not only the art of sensationalism but of camouflaging it.

1067.

That a celestial body, immersed in darkness, can suddenly be bathed in light isn't the miracle of life but the one preceding it.

1068.

It's the unwritten policy of powerful nations in the West that, while humanistic values should be promoted as much as possible, so also atrocities but, of course, only if this be done discreetly, at a distance, and when it's good for business.

1069.

So much of the public discourse on contemporary issues, particularly in the media, is like junk food. It's consumed by a majority of people who, with little time on their hands and looking for easy and convenient ways of getting information, are not as disposed as they might otherwise be to looking after their intellectual health.

1070

No, it's not that the news media of today is so different from what it once was, but that its mask is less firmly in place.

1071.

If it's true that the majority of people, leading busy lives, want their news on the run, that is, as concise and uncomplicated as possible, then the media can hardly be blamed for meeting this demand even if, by not doing things as objectively and thoroughly as they could, by not resisting the temptation to capitalize on the situation or, more precisely, the limitations of a large number of people with respect to many things but particularly their time and energy, and, finally, by not having any qualms about merely feigning to keep up the highest standards, they end up looking like scoundrels.

1072.

The game of good and evil precedes the game of good versus evil, the second canceling the first only as a false *Aufhebung*.

1073.

Thank God for appearances which domesticate truth and make it liveable!

1074.

Respectable scoundrels, those members of society who do rather well despite or even on account of their deep-seated dishonesty, are so common in politics and other places of power nowadays that, with all their talk about changing society and the world for the better, they may very well end up ushering in a modern-day Babylon cleverly billed as the New Jerusalem.

1075.

Just as one doesn't have to be among people to enjoy the camaraderie and good cheer of others, so one doesn't have to be young to enjoy the high-spiritedness of youth.

1076.

The sky is falling! The sky is falling! The sky is falling! Yes, the sky is really falling! – this time. . . Well, maybe. (Note: As in the case of the boy who cried wolf, these false alarms dull sensitivities that might one day be urgently needed.)

1077.

People who stand out while standing with the crowd usually prosper best during their lifetime, but people who stand out by standing away from the crowd beyond it.

1078.

The subhuman in society, insofar as it's above the animal and outside the precincts of morality, has always been, apart from the enslaved, the incarcerated, and the incapacitated, the poor, the irretrievably poor.

1079.

First of all, there is the longstanding suspicion about the policies and practises of the people who govern us. At the same time, however, there has been the great counterbalance of a general respect for and belief in institutions such as the press, the schools and universities, the law courts, and the scientific community. But now, what's happening to this great counterbalance? Is it not diminishing before our very eyes? And if this is the case, what then stands between us and general disbelief in the integrity of institutions? Perhaps what we have here are the signs of an oncoming catastrophe we don't want to see conveniently obscured by the signs of the ones we think we do.

1080.

When we turn the page on one chapter in life and begin another, it's as if we'd left behind a world totally familiar to us to which it becomes more and more difficult to return.

1081.

A great deal of money may not be enough to get away with murder, but a great deal of power often is.

1082.

Part of being polite and politically correct is avoiding honesty considered to be harmful.

1083.

He started off as an idealist and, with his great speaking abilities, won himself an audience. Then, wanting to keep this audience, he struggled to keep his thinking not too far from what he had formerly thought even while making sure to keep it not too far from his audience's perception of things or, less politely, prejudices.

1084.

Even if, later in life, we come to the realization that worldly

success, particularly in the form of fame and fortune, isn't all it's cracked up to be, we may still yearn for it, thinking it will be a wonderful change before the downward spiral.

1085.

There are writings that can't fit themselves to the times but must wait for the times to fit themselves to them.

1086.

Truth telling performs a multitude of tasks while adhering to a gold standard that, like the sun, never fails to assert itself even while permitting a multitude of deviations.

1087.

From being fully in the shadows as non-issue to fully in the spotlight as major one, how many times have we seen this happen or, rather, not "seen" it? For once something is in the spotlight and as long as it remains there, it's viewed by a host of people as being something permanent, something untouchable,

something on the order of a moral touchstone by which one can judge others and distinguish between good and evil.

1088.

The media promulgates alarmism, but this doesn't mean it's always wrong in insisting on some widespread or general danger. It only means it has a vested interest in doing so.

1089.

The power of present information doesn't depend on its precision but on its being successfully presented as accurate and reliable.

1090.

If all that's undesired and loathed in life lacked interest, it would lose, in a manner of speaking, its one saving grace.

1091.

Who would want to be cursed with fully knowing the future? Who would not rather have much of the best coming as a surprise and much of the worst with as little worry as possible?

1092.

Here's an easy way of doing propaganda to be found everywhere: treat the wins of your adversary as if they were but Pyrrhic victories while one's own as decisive factors in the war against him. On the other hand, treat the losses of one's enemy as crippling or even mortal blows while one's own as mere tactical retreats.

1093.

An intellectual or scholar is likely to lose the measured, thoughtful approach he adopts in the classroom or at a conference when, upon seeking the political spotlight or being thrust into it, he becomes the vulgarizer and pamphleteer of his own thoughts.

1094.

Any situation can make stupid if all its variables don't align perfectly with what's available in one's skillset.

1095.

What's very difficult, perhaps impossible, is to shine the most penetrating light on where we're most favoured or most successful.

1096.

Ad hominem arguments are used by those who are interested not in scoring a bulls eye in discussion but rather in landing anywhere they can on the target. To make it a much bigger thing to hit and have these new dimensions as the more or less accepted standard is what is consciously or unconsciously aimed at.

1097.

Mother love is perhaps the most constant thing in affairs of the heart with young woman's love coming in a distant second.

1098.

What is a debate? A complicated discussion in which, for various reasons, the participants can't admit its empty centre, its core of uncertainty.

1099.

Bad luck always gets our attention while good luck often goes unrecognized.

1100.

Ninety per cent of what keeps us alive, our bodily processes and a nurturing world, isn't our doing. Say what you will against religion, but at least it should be acknowledged that it reminds us of these both external and internal forces that we're

dependent on and greatly exceed us.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

1101-1150

1101.

The political correctness that the media rides on (but not only the media) as their morality, as *the* morality, will one day pass. How it does, however, is anyone's guess, for the range of possibilities extends from a simple change of fashion to an earth-shaking event.

1102.

Party politics is perpetual war but carried out like professional wrestling.

1103.

No matter how much in the world is the result of chance, it will never equal the incalculable luck that brought about the

astronomical long shot of a life-sustaining planet.

1104.

Make all politicians honest, wise, and competent, and you'd have a better world but without their entertainment value.

1105.

Perhaps one of the most secret affairs of the heart is not being as deeply affected by other people's suffering as we think we should be.

1106.

Flying one's political colours in public usually entails buying into a number of issues. Picking and choosing among them isn't an option unless party politics isn't the game and winning the goal.

1107.

Just as one can succeed in some great project if lucky (no insurmountable obstacle), so one can fail in it favourably (something learned) or forgivably (respectable attempt). Anything else in this area must be classed as catastrophic or demonic.

1108

Party politics has as its most consistent policy the one of painting the opposition in the most unfavourable light this side (and perhaps the other side) of the law court.

1109.

Some people are so caught up in their suffering they've got nothing left to do but share it.

1110.

With sufficient power and resources to influence it, public opinion can be taken in almost any direction.

1111.

Besides appealing to emotion, propaganda is a call to reason based on claims presumably strong enough to convince all but fools or miscreants that the situation is so urgent as to demand taking action without delay and without question.

1112.

**Said one who wanted to look on the sunny side of death:
“Summer’s over, but there’ll be millions more. My God, what or where will I be to see and relish them all?”**

1113.

There is a lot of wisdom to be found in great literary works, which distinguishes them from merely good or enjoyable ones.

1114.

Just as it seems we desire to be as gods and know all, so it seems heavy curtains have been put both in front of and behind

us to prevent this.

1115.

The living don't worry about the dead except for those they know or imagine. All the rest are like so many black cows on a dark night.

1116.

If one truly wanted to get rid of all that's bad in life, one would have to come up with some means (so extraordinary as to be almost unimaginable) of keeping up interest in all the rest.

1117.

Most people who think they have the final word on some matter are simply repeating what they've heard elsewhere and, taking it to be authoritative, gives them the confidence to voice it in public. They then feel justified not only in thinking about the matter without criticism or circumspection but also in growing

angry should anyone not accept their *argumentum ad auctoritatem*.

1118.

There was a time, not so long ago, when people smoked almost everywhere but hardly ever swore in public or in polite company. Now almost the opposite is true and, generally speaking, we think we're the better for it. But how can we be sure of this since it took hundreds of years to determine the worst effects of smoking? Couldn't the same or something similar be true of a vice that, however rehabilitated, is likely prone to recidivism?

1119.

What counts in political conflict above all else is an unequivocal for and against. Thus it is that even the most honest and straightforward of partisans are forced, at least at certain moments, to forget nuances, subtleties, making distinctions, looking at the whole picture, and perhaps what constituted the best part of their earlier thought.

1120.

Politics can only work with a mixture of honesty and dishonesty because, with so many participants, partners, and levels of agreement and disagreement, one or the other on its own would be like pouring sand in the gears of a giant machine.

1121.

What are the prospects of those who, at an advanced age, come down with a serious illness? Is it not either receiving treatment and then going on as a shadow of their former selves or not receiving it and soon making their exit? A situation seems to be arising both society and medicine will have to deal with as a developing ethical area mapped out not only by concepts of dignity in dying and death but also ones of social expedience and necessity.

1122.

Between life and death is a time line that seemed so long in earliest years but grows ever shorter as we get older.

1123.

If reason is the basis of truth, then reason's not being able to ground itself, that is, not being able to assert or establish itself on the basis of reason alone, is its implicit nod to its inherently incomplete or contradictory nature.

1124.

How many lucky ones have avoided selling their soul for stardom or something akin to it simply by not being successful enough to gain access into this temple of extraordinarily open and direct and, at the same time, terribly oblique and hidden temptations?

1125.

At a recent conference on social justice and moral responsibility, one Western politician was asked a question about poverty. This topic not being on the agenda, he responded curtly: "What must be given top priority nowadays are minority rights and, what is no less important, saving the planet. As for the redistribution of wealth, that will certainly be attended to along the way."

1126.

Life is what is lent to us and death the loss of the particular moment or miracle of our making.

1127.

How can there be an end to cruelty in the world when it's tied up with what so many people believe is justice?

1128.

Cruelty is the animal that wants food, the elements that exceed their limits, the justice that often tips over into injustice. Now, in the face of these horrific conditions, is it any wonder that all has been recast and simplified as good versus evil? And should this moral dualism, this metaphysics, this human construct be now regarded as a major accomplishment, a major error, or a major falsehood? Or should it be regarded as all three?

1129.

A person in the prime of youth and one in decrepit old age are such vastly different creatures that it's hard to think of one coming from the other or one becoming the other.

1130.

When it comes to morality, the popular mind is the mightiest display of mediocrity there is.

1131.

Moral superiority is the last refuge of those both sufficiently vain and dissatisfied with themselves to look for ways to blacken others.

1132.

If you've ever thought it would be a wonderful thing to know all the little secrets of some great person past or present, consider that some of these secrets must refer to what everyone keeps

silent about as a matter of dignity.

1133.

The only cure for consumerism is a crash.

1134.

The only cure for consumerism is a successful form of communism. But this might strike many as oxymoronic.

1135.

An aphorism at its highest moment (which is never a cliché but could end up one) is a singular thought expressed in a unique way.

1136.

Political correctness is the modern-day liturgy by means of which even the scoundrel and hypocrite look pious and devout.

1137.

Everybody lives in the bubble of the now and, for this reason, we're often afraid of what we shouldn't be afraid of and vice versa.

1138.

While it's true the victor writes the history, letting the victim write it won't make it objective but only different.

1139.

What seems durable is only what outlasts whatever else is there but on its way out.

1140.

Collective fear leads to collective stupidity. It would be a mistake to think the authorities and powers that be won't play along with this or be complicit in it, even to the detriment of society, when they don't find it in their best interest not to. The

proof of this? Well, think of how many institutions in Germany fell in line with the Nazis. Even the universities and churches toed the line. Wasn't this a result of widespread fear in conjunction with a policy, equally widespread, of looking after particular interests?

1141.

When it comes to the possibility of being blamed for an innocent person's death, everybody – governments, health authorities, business owners, commentators, private individuals – would prefer to err on the side of caution and even over-caution. Despite this going the extra mile, there will always be some who, wanting to make sure no suspicion is cast on where their priorities lie, will claim we haven't been cautious enough.

1142.

It is the situation of the media nowadays that its success is based on being able to talk about issues and events twenty-four seven. With this economic and sometimes political pressure of having to talk even when there might not be much worth saying,

it's small wonder that repetition, exaggeration, sensationalism, and alarmism have become ever more prominent features of this industry. The effects on society, both short and long term, are not fully known but are already showing signs of being – dare one say it? – something to be alarmed about.

1143.

Even those of the highest integrity, once they have adopted and maintained a political position, can never be truth tellers of the highest order. Their priority is polemics, the winning on the battlefield, the commitment to a line of action and, as such, although they're quite willing to point the finger at their enemies (often quite rightly, of course), they rarely, if ever, do so at themselves.

1144.

Perhaps the greatest flaw of those of us who are strong is that we seldom think of ourselves as being one day weak and so, all of a sudden, propelled into a group that, in however slight a way, we secretly held in contempt.

1145.

During the early years of the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt famously said: “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” For the health of a society, this prescription is probably worth more than most others.

1146.

Talk about killing the goose that lay the golden egg! If ever the media succeeds in tanking the economy by fear-mongering, it will have unleashed a Frankenstein upon the world not only making others tremble but also the ones who created it.

1147.

Given all the horrors that governments of every kind have unleashed for various reasons throughout history in countries such as Japan, Vietnam, Cambodia, Rwanda, Germany, and so on, what could be wiser than not to be a bit cautious when listening to what they tell you in times of emergency?

1148.

The present-day governments of the world, like no doubt all governments throughout history faced with major disruptions due to famine, disease, war, revolution, economic collapse, etc., want to show they are completely in control of the situation. But given the alacrity with which they try to carry this out, widespread bungling and deception are no less characteristic of their actions than the contrary.

1149.

A: From what I understand (and from what I now see around me), the capitalistic system, in a state of crisis, moves towards socialism. At least in the sense that, in a desperate attempt to save itself, governments grant huge bailouts, no doubt with stringent conditions attached, to private enterprise. What do you think?

B: Well, if what you're saying is true, then the socialism in question is perverse. After all, these bailouts are meant to prop up the system, aren't they?

A: No question of that, but as some have pointed out, it can still be a government move to control the economy. It's just that it's

more for the rich than the poor.

B: Well, be that as it may, it's certainly not government control of the means of production. The question is, could it ever become that. What do you think? I mean, could there ever be a creeping form of socialist takeover, working its way through capitalism, or does it require a revolution?

A: Predicting the future is always a risky business. But if we're to go by the past, it seems to require a revolution. After all, capitalists aren't going to fold their tents at the first shot.

B: Yes, there certainly have been successful revolutions in the past (bloody ones too) but what about the systems they installed? Could the same be said of them?

A: There the report card's a bit spotty. Of course, everyone knows of the Russian experiment.

B: And failure.

A: And then there's the Chinese one.

B: Where, it seems, creeping capitalism saved the day.

A: Wow! A strange picture, indeed! A creeping socialism to save capitalism and a creeping capitalism to save socialism!

B: A full circle, it seems.

A: Yes. Let's hope not a vicious one.

1150.

The strange is as much at the heart of us as at the furthest stretches of the universe.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

1151-1200

1151.

COVID-19 aphorism: Throughout history there have been people who, for various reasons, have been treated as pariahs and who, to use the current vernacular, have known what it is to be socially distanced. Now we have a situation unique in human history in which virtually everyone in the world has this status to some degree or other. As long as it persists, one can imagine a few true outcasts of society, those who live on the street, for example, asking: “Why are they avoiding each other? Why are they doing what they usually do to us? Hey ma’am! Hey, mister! How does it feel, ma’am? How does it feel, mister?”

1152.

COVID-19 aphorism: A pandemic of lying by various or virtually all political actors in the Western world. A pandemic of horrendous accumulated debt over many years. A pandemic of hype in the

media that never ceases. A pandemic of public complicity in all this because few want to see the writing on the wall. And, finally, a pandemic of fear and panic (let's hope not violence) caused by a little virus with some distinctly unsettling traits that, in turn, causes the whole house of cards to collapse.

1153.

COVID-19 aphorism: Brave New World! One day the planet caught a cold and, all of a sudden, it turned itself into a giant hospital.

1154.

The aphorism as way of thought ends where anger, argument, and action begin. Its life is the peaceful contemplation of what has been, what is, or what might be. Its death is the apocalyptic war or event that, as one great and final epigram or epitaph, ends all.

1155.

Being bested in an argument doesn't equal being in the wrong for

the same reason that having the right position doesn't equal being in a position to argue it.

1156.

A: I may not know much about economics, but one thing I do know is that both socialism and capitalism are capable of bringing good arguments to the table. How is one to decide between them?

B: Perhaps there's no deciding apart from what historical circumstances determine. The arguments would then come into play merely as great facilitators of radical change.

A: That would mean the arguments themselves are . . .

B: Like two types of currency, each having its turn being recognized as true coin or rejected as false money.

1157.

The difference between a philosopher and a professor of philosophy is that the second is also an official who, when speaking in this capacity, is that much less a philosopher.

A: It has been reported by unnamed sources that the powers that be have launched a world-wide social experiment to determine how many and how far people are willing to police themselves based on some ill-founded fear or exaggerated danger.

B: What powers that be? Who is carrying out this experiment?

A: Well, I suppose the rich and powerful. Don't you think there's something to it?

B: I don't like conspiracy theories. If it's a social experiment, it's all of us who are carrying it out. It's all of us who, for one reason or another, have decided to live dangerously.

A: Live dangerously! Isn't it exactly the opposite? People are hunkered down all over the world. They're afraid to go out of their homes. They're petrified of some enemy that, like a ghost, they can't see. How can this be called living dangerously?

B: They're risking destroying the world's economy, that's certainly living dangerously. They're risking losing the comfortable lifestyle they've always known.

A: Do you really believe what you're saying?

B: No, not at the individual level. People, generally speaking, are cowards. But at the collective level, at the level of the world, at the level of the times and circumstances as *Zeitgeist*, it may be

that these people (I don't say all) are taking a chance with their lives.

A: But it could all lead to ruination. How could anyone, for whatever reason, wish this upon themselves?

B: They don't, of course. No one does. Certainly not the rich. But it's happening because people, in their hearts, want change more than they want comfort. Not on an individual level, perhaps, but on the collective. They get tired of the same old world.

A: And the excitement over wars . . .

B: Falls into the same category.

A: Only now we're all engulfed in this change of worlds.

B: Yes, this is the truly unique thing.

1159.

When it comes to managing a new situation dangerously out of control, knowledge and experience not wedded to courage and wisdom are a dead letter.

1160.

Compromising one's principles in the face of changing and

adverse circumstances is something to which no one is immune.

1161.

If everybody did even a modest amount of research, TV journalism would fall into disrepute overnight.

1162.

COVID-19 aphorism: Never has there been such attention to worldwide mortality as there is today. The only trouble is that, morally, politically, and psychologically speaking, it focuses on a small part of it. People who die from cancer, heart disease, diabetes, tuberculosis, malaria, hunger, murder, suicide, war, traffic accidents and so on are left entirely out of the picture.

1163.

Every time we sit on the white porcelain throne to be found in every home, we get a sharp reminder of how much the high is tied to the low, the pure to the impure.

1164.

The majority of people think that, by simply being the majority, they must be in the right. But they are wrong for, in exceptional times, it is exceptional people, a definite minority, who are in the right.

1165.

Politicians and mainstream media are masters of the half-truth or quarter-truth that, under normal circumstances, doesn't get much play or doesn't have much effect on society. But if one or more of these everyday lies becomes an important part of raising a general alarm that itself gets out of hand and becomes ever greater as "false" alarm, its potential as injurious element in society or, for that matter, the world is enormous.

1166.

The most frightening equation in the world is collective intelligence + collective stupidity = collective suicide.

1167.

Between what we call dead and what we call living, there is a great deal of activity and transmission. A book, for example, is as much the past reaching towards the future and into the present as the other way.

1168.

The reason for corruption is that rules bent to gain some significant advantage can easily become rules to be secretly but strictly followed. Extending from those who are simply greedy to those in need or distress, a sometimes small, sometimes large number of people find themselves playing a double game that, as it becomes more and more habit, preference, or “poison of choice,” leaves them with no desire to lose whatever is gained by it. On the other hand, the loss of character that ensues is usually borne quite well apart from anything that may turn it into something much worse for them, namely, loss of reputation.

1169.

Professional critics rarely if ever engage in self-criticism. To this extent, they fall short of being those who tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

1170.

Let all those who would like to hear a modern-day parable read my story. It comes at a time when I think it could shed some light on human behaviour, specifically, on *collective* human behaviour. You see, on the one hand, it all depends on upbringing or training and, on the other, conditions or circumstances. If the two match, everything goes wonderfully. If they don't, a breakdown occurs that, if we're honest, should not be taken lightly.

The incident I wish to speak of happened some thirty years ago. It was at an airport and I was a taxi driver. It was on a Sunday when far fewer taxis than normal were on the road. For some reason, a huge passenger plane made an unexpected landing at the Winnipeg International Airport. There were no taxis in the airport corral because another passenger plane had landed shortly before. As a consequence,

hundreds of passengers poured out of the terminal and, encumbered with their luggage, spread out over a large area. Patiently they waited for some taxis to show up and whisk them home after a long and tiring flight. So patient were they at the outset, I imagine, and patient were they, most of them, at any rate, when I first arrived on the scene.

But, putting aside this, imagine my shock when I saw so many people stranded at the airport with no taxi in sight except my own! As soon as I came into view, dozens of people from all sections of the spread-out crowd started waving at me, giving me the impression that they wanted me to choose the one whom I thought was most in need. What followed, however, was more a combination of two instinctive and very individual moves, a sort of action and reaction. The first person to step away from the crowd to lay claim to my taxi was successful largely because his action instantly prompted me to hit the brakes. A few seconds later, as we drove away, this young man probably thought pretty well of himself. Perhaps he even felt a bit smug. On the other hand, I'm certain that many of the other passengers, at least the ones standing close to him, didn't approve of his actions. After all, surely there were some older or less healthy people who would've benefitted greatly by getting away first. The

impetuous young man had robbed them of at least one such possibility. No doubt, if he had any remorse about this, he would've quickly got rid of it by thinking about all the other taxis that would soon be arriving at the airport. Yes, I'm sure this was his thought as I drove him to his destination. (I don't remember where I dropped him off.) After all, this was the very thought I had when, after finishing with this fare, I responded to the dispatcher's insistent demand to pick up passengers still waiting at the airport. Once again, when coming into view of the terminal, I was shocked to see so many people still waiting for a taxi and with none in sight. Honestly speaking, I don't remember who got into my cab this second time, but I'm sure the boarding operation was the more customary thing of people being polite and letting the person or people first in line take the taxi or else the person or people most in need of it. Notwithstanding this, I experienced once again the strange phenomenon of dozens of people trying to flag me down as my taxi approached the terminal. It couldn't have been a rational response since there was obviously no reason for me to bypass a great number of other passengers to get to them. Of course, as soon as my cab was occupied, they ceased their frantic waving and once again wore patient but tired expressions on their travel-worn faces. At this point in

my story, who wouldn't have a good opinion of these representatives of civilized society? Who wouldn't think that their patience, self-control, tolerance, and, yes, even generosity were defining characteristics? I'm sure that some such thought or thoughts were in my head when I drove my second fare from the airport to his or her or their destination. (I don't remember this trip at all.) Now, as I move towards the conclusion of this story, perhaps you will already have an idea of what it must be. This should be particularly true when I tell you that I had to make a *third* trip to the airport. Perhaps its denouement will even be clearer when I tell you that, once again, I came across a large group of tired and probably hungry passengers. These were people, to say it once again, who were waiting for taxis that, at least in large numbers, never showed up.

Finally, if I tell you that, once again, I was the only taxi in sight, you may already know where this story is headed. I don't mean anything particularly sad, tragic, or depressing by saying this: I only mean to bring into view what a great philosopher called the *human all too human*. Yes, to my great surprise and consternation, pandemonium broke out when these people saw my taxi pull up the third time. They jumped in front of one another in a mad scramble to get to my cab, tear open the

doors, and get themselves lodged inside. Some, of course, succeeded in doing this while the rest, stymied in their attempt to get away after so much waiting, stood around or mulled about, some looking very angry, some looking almost heartbroken, and some with simply a glassy look in their eyes. I have no recollection of who my passengers were on this third trip from the airport. It doesn't really matter.

1170.

Has it ever been observed that, on many occasions, a person who is an expert in one area, if he becomes highly popular in the media, quickly morphs into a person who is an expert in virtually all areas?

1171.

It could be said that the concept of human rights has been expanded in recent years to include almost every identifiable group as thoroughly and equitably as possible. It could also be said that the subject is controversial in at least some areas where moral and ethical development is uncertain. What

makes the situation even more tenuous not only in these areas but in a general way is the fact that, when sensitivities are raised to a certain level, many are ready to downgrade a basic right like freedom of expression to exercise a newly formed one like protection from it.

1172.

COVID-19 aphorism: There have been viruses since the beginning of time and each and every one of us carries around trillions of them every day. What! Do you think the world will be improved by turning everyone into a germaphobe? Rather, it's a recipe for disaster (I put aside all lesser but still important concerns) should ever a pestilence come along greater than the current one.

1173.

A: Oh, it's horrid! Do you see what this person has written? He's basically saying that right now, in the midst of this pandemic, we're willing to sacrifice our economy to protect the sick, vulnerable, and elderly. But one day, in the not-too

distant future, it'll be quite the contrary. We'll be willing to sacrifice them to protect our standard of living.

B: What he's written does seem nightmarish but it's far from outlandish. There are many writers who, in different ways, have shown what the human race is capable of. Take Michel de Montaigne, for example. What he wrote four hundred years ago about different customs and rituals throughout the world would make your hair stand on end. And if you need a more recent example, think of Franz Kafka. There you have a world where bureaucracy runs rampant and is as inhuman as any machine or system you can think of.

A: But what you're saying has nothing to do with our world. It's all about past worlds or fictitious ones. Our world today is, as you know, all about saving the planet.

B: Indeed, a noble-sounding project, to be sure. But one that might take a bit of time. In the meantime, acute scarcity could arise and interfere with these plans.

A: What! Interfere with saving the planet?

B: I think you'll agree our most essential values are food, water, and shelter. It's on this basis everything else is possible.

A: I heard it said the other day that trying to stop a pandemic with social distancing and masks is like trying to stop a river with a stick. What do you think?

B: That we'll continue to use this stick despite knowing that nature is mightier than us. It's our modern-day magic wand that, in the form of technology and collective action, we think can accomplish miracles.

A: It galls me that so many people are committed to this path of hubris and narcissism. Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad.

B: And I would add: "We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep."

A: Amen.

The main difference between an aphorism and an argument is that, while the first is primarily an attempt to tell the truth one knows or thinks one knows as well as possible (and is therefore somewhat idle because it doesn't go much further), the second

is primarily an attempt to tell the truth one thinks others should know. The second is therefore an attempt to win over others, to exercise power, to be useful and active even to the point of risking error by rendering the uncertain certain, the unknown known.

1176

Everybody has the tendency to talk about a particular matter as if they were an expert on it if they have heard somebody else talk about it as an expert and believed every word they said. What is forgotten is that there are few subjects on which the experts agree and probably none on which they agree absolutely. Indeed, there are many on which they have completely opposing views.

1177.

COVID-19 aphorism: A sign of the times: It is no longer good form to advise someone to be honest, strong, brave, or truthful but rather safe.

1178.

Truthfulness without goodness equals cold-hearted calculation while goodness without truthfulness equals passionate wrongheadedness.

1179.

Taken together, truthfulness without goodness and goodness without truthfulness are perdition.

1180.

If all those who, moving towards the end of their lives, lived each day as if it could be their last, they would be led less by fear than by fortitude.

1181.

COVID-19 aphorism: It is possible that, looking back, historians will write that never has there been such crass stupidity not to mention cravenness shown among so many

different sectors of the population as there is today.

1182.

COVID-19 aphorism: With respect to certain diseases like influenza, some who catch it will have no symptoms, some will have mild symptoms, some will have severe ones, and some will die. But does anyone think it could be otherwise?

1183.

What the media has the power of doing is making what are ultimately fringe events central – at least for a time.

1184.

A: It is argued here that, during the current pandemic, people who don't observe social distancing and other forms of anti-viral behaviour are guilty of killing others, specifically those who are both sick and aged, the vulnerable part of society. The person making this argument seems to think it has great force.

B: You mean he says what he says forcefully. With passion and conviction, is that it?

A: Indeed! He definitely wants to get the message out that we should assume our collective responsibility.

B: A lot could be said on this matter but, if you don't mind, I would like to ask a question. Does the person who makes this argument, which is obviously a morally charged one – does he make it as if he were dealing with a simple matter or a complex one? I mean to say, does he treat the issue of the health and care of the vulnerable part of society in conjunction with the health and care of society as a whole?

A: No, I can't say he does other than make his primary point as forcefully as possible and without any other considerations.

B: Well, is that not an act of bad faith? He is willing to impugn others and urge them to accept either a collective guilt or a collective responsibility while reducing the health and care of society to the health and care of one small part of it.

A: He seems to think that they are one and the same.

B: But does he argue it? If he doesn't argue it, then, by virtue of trying to put others in an extremely bad light, he himself must be acting in a less than virtuous way.

A: I don't think he, as a man who has always shown the

highest integrity, would accept this charge. However, it's true that at the present time he doesn't seem to be willing to entertain any counterarguments.

1185.

COVID-19 aphorism: To think there are millions of people around the world who listen to the incessant reports about a health threat and never stop to think this might be the unhealthiest thing of all!

1186.

The default position of people on the left who, roughly speaking, are city dwellers seems to be that those on the right are not as pure-minded and well-motivated as they are. However, if there were a severe food shortage which the country folk themselves were not responsible for but did all in their power to alleviate, it would probably undergo a sea change.

1187.

COVID-19 aphorism: In their infinite wisdom, the governments of the world have declared that all their citizens should keep themselves safe from the coronavirus even if this makes them sick in all other ways.

1188.

The main advantage of the truth over the long term is that it's a prevailing wind hard to resist.

1189.

COVID-19 aphorism: Now that they've got us lining up like zombies and programmed to do away with smiles and close contact, tell me, as you've done so many times before, good sir, how we should all come together as one global community?

1190.

COVID-19 aphorism: Is there anything more curious than all these people who, wearing protective masks while playing with their smart phones, combine modern-day amulets with latest technology?

1191.

When television first came into being, it was hailed as the future teacher of the masses. It was a utopian view that couldn't envision a dystopian outcome, despite George Orwell's *1984* coming out about the same time.

1192.

COVID-19 aphorism: A sign of the increased public awareness about health issues since the outbreak of the coronavirus: A man going up to a clerk in a grocery store and buying a carton of cigarettes while wearing his mask.

1193.

COVID-19 aphorism: Never in the field of human leadership have so few made such a mess for so many.

1194.

COVID-19 aphorism: Would anyone not have thought even six months ago that introducing widespread anti-social practises wasn't a good thing?

1195.

COVID-19 aphorism: Here's the title of a future book whose subject matter is fairly easy to predict: *Children Who Grow Up under Social Distancing and Mask Wearing: The Psychological Consequences.*

1196.

COVID-19 aphorism: When various institutions – governmental, political, educational, commercial – loudly

proclaim they are taking certain measures to protect the public, it's almost certain what they really wish to protect are themselves but not so much as a group of individuals as a functioning entity, a sustaining environment, a means of livelihood, a privileged habitat.

1197.

An issue or problem has been politicized when both sides are absolutely certain who's right and who's wrong and, a close second, who's good and who's evil.

1198.

Science is the best and most up-to-date knowledge we have on a matter. What it isn't is the final word on anything except for those who have turned it into a religion.

1199.

What many protesters seem to want when they go out onto the streets to protest is a perfect world to run rampant.

1200.

Wisdom out of foolishness: When we argue with someone over a matter we think we know well; when we pursue it at length with a person we consider to be no fool but stubborn enough not to fall in line with our way of thinking, we ourselves might play the fool by giving full rein to our presumed mastery of the subject and, as a consequence, find it also to be one of which we are to some degree ignorant.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

1201-1250

1201.

No one has a lock on language which makes it, with its both glacial and lightening ways of doing work or effecting change, the lord of the humanly possible. No well-off, self-serving setup or operation can prevent its minor incursions as hostile elements or make its centre immune from eventual attack. No political, social, cultural, or philosophical hegemony can maintain itself without both harbouring and fighting this ever-evolving worm.

1202.

The hare is in history as something already past but, as something still going on, the tortoise.

1203.

COVID-19 aphorism: Welcome to the new world order! Not only in the work place but in all stores and venues, equal opportunity now extends to being treated as a potentially dangerous disease carrier.

1204.

When it comes to bandwagon policymaking with political correctness in mind, corporate cunning and corporate cowardice come together as good citizenry.

1205.

COVID-19 aphorism: What the coronavirus, climate change, and systemic racism have in common are causes that, like God, are largely invisible and effects that, like the Devil's doings, stretch from A to Z.

1206.

COVID-19 aphorism: Thin cloth masks worn both in public and private to prevent contagion will one day be viewed as being as efficient in their purpose as amulets and religious tokens in theirs.

1207.

COVID-19 aphorism: Every single day 150,000 people die on this planet. If it were possible to shed a tear for each and every one of them, one would be dead oneself in no time. Therefore, the commiseration for all these unknowns or even a fraction of them is but a putting on display of one's humanity lest anyone have any doubts about it.

1208.

Just as piety was used in past ages to cover a multitude of sins, so political correctness today.

1209.

Mainstream journalism is currently fighting for its survival by fighting to keep its audience, its credibility, and its ethics but, be it noted, in this order and this order alone.

1210.

Political commentary listened to now will be remembered in later years as if it had been background noise while doing other things.

1211.

Courage and wisdom found together constitute not only an alloy but pure gold.

1212.

Most popular news and commentary is there for all of us whose lives aren't as eventful and emotionally charged as perhaps they once were or perhaps we'd secretly like.

1213.

Before the assassinations, before the atrocities, before the mass murders and executions, and before the genocides, one thing is absolutely necessary: an unrelenting war of propaganda that makes one group, faction, side, or country think that another is finally getting what it deserves.

1214.

Woe to those who fall victim to the unrestrained fury of the mob! For once this hydra-headed monster is unleashed from the norms of civilized behaviour, it has no thought but for its anger, its power, and its ability to do almost anything with impunity.

1215.

If there are people today who don't believe many governments can act stupidly, they know nothing about the First World War or, at least, one of its major causes: a series of military alliances between neighbouring European nations that were not only industrialized and highly competitive, but also heavily armed.

Conceived as a means of offering mutual benefit and protection as well as avoiding any outbreak of war on the Continent, the alliances not only allowed one hostile incident to set in motion a series of aggressive gestures and war-like actions, but also these hostilities to be honoured as legal commitments. All in all, no authority took note that all controlling factors had been effectively eliminated and that conflict between nations had become a mutually destructive affair of such magnitude that any final winner would be hardly the better for it.

1216.

What greater proof is there that those who are presumably in control of the world are never completely in control and may let things slip dangerously out of control than the First World War.

1217.

There is a great deal of talk about hate speech nowadays but very little about its most obvious and dangerous manifestation: the enmity and verbal violence that characterize political discourse. To think it can be eliminated by continuing with a

series of limited successes on this or that front, to think it can be extirpated from the human psyche, to think it can be measurably reduced while being generated daily by political differences and disagreements is to be oblivious to its hydra-headed nature, its ability to grow new heads when old ones are lopped off.

1218.

The governments of today seem to be no more aware of the great danger they court in polarizing public opinion than the late nineteenth century governments of Europe were aware of what they were doing as prelude to the First World War. If it could be said that the second was akin to wiring countries together with volatile explosives of unknown power, then so with the first except, instead of military alliances posing the hidden threat, it's now cultural-economic-corporate-political alignments.

1219.

A dictator's worst nightmare is the many coming to a new understanding of their situation that turns fear to anger.

1220.

COVID-19 aphorism: In a world where everyone wears a mask as a dubious form of protection or show of support for government, wearing a broad smile becomes a revolutionary act.

1221.

COVID-19 aphorism: The saying ‘Stay well!’ so frequently heard nowadays seems to echo a fear that’s become fashionable.

1222.

COVID-19 aphorism: Never does the expression “*La comédie humaine*” seem more apposite than when all go about with masks on as if attending a worldwide conference of clowns.

1223.

The illusion that people go about like automatons in grocery stores is admittedly egoist but still strong.

1224.

COVID-19 aphorism: The pandemic has not only succeeded in frightening the world but making it look ridiculous.

1225.

COVID-19 aphorism: Thanks to politicians of all stripes, people are far sicker from the virus carried by airwaves than the airborne one.

1226.

One of the advantages of political correctness is it relieves people of the burden of self-criticism.

1227.

When it comes to assessing politicians and political commentators, it's not so much a question of who's telling the truth as who's lying the least and with the least harm to society.

1228.

COVID-19 aphorism: Motto of the New World Order for 2020 (and perhaps later): Only COVID kills – for now.

1229.

COVID-19 aphorism: Only a combination of factors equivalent to the alignment of the planets can explain this madness.

1230.

Perhaps one of the most universal but least recognized of our needs or drives is maintaining a good self-image. In a multitude of ways stretching from the popular to the private and even the perverted, it secretly guides us as we play our often very similar but also very different roles as actors on the world stage who have spectators, including ourselves. For the most part or at least for most of us, it's easy to leave aside the size of the parts we play or the grandeur of the stage we're on.

1231.

COVID-19 aphorism: Just as cigarette smoking was once socially acceptable to the point of absurdity (e.g., a doctor promoting it on TV), so it is now with mask wearing (e.g., a mother foisting it on her two-year-old).

1232.

Truth must often play catch-up but, as a sort of compensation, it also knows how to play hardball.

1233.

COVID-19 aphorism: The current crisis has given birth to a political monstrosity which in turn has created an ethical one, namely, forced facial unfriendliness.

1234.

To be a politician almost forces one to become a Pinocchio at

some point, high integrity notwithstanding.

1235.

Having a vision of a better world is all to the credit of those on the left, but if they're willing to use dishonest means to realize it, better they forget it. (But, of course, they won't.)

1236.

We have a dishonest media and dishonest politicians who many people respect for reasons not so obvious unless it's simply the one of not having either the time or inclination to check them out.

1237.

Death is total indifference to the goings-on and hubbub of life to a degree that's deeper than even dreaming about them goes.

1238.

Moving towards the left where utopian schemes can flourish allows politicians to make grandiose promises. Today they seem to be about climate change and pandemics. (What is to be done and how to do it are short on specifics.) Tomorrow they may be about earthquakes, volcanoes, asteroids, and continental drift. Of course, all of this is ridiculous but, politically speaking, it makes sense because many people are willing to believe the government has god-like powers. In truth, what these wizards accomplish by getting whole populations to go along with them borders on the superhuman but in less a divine than demonic way.

1239.

Youth is fresh for this world and its functionality, often fitting in with it better than age. But when it comes to its aberrations, often the handiwork of those with experience and selfish intentions, ignorant, uninformed, and ill-equipped.

1240.

In human affairs where corruption is common enough, correction is also there to save us from ourselves.

1241.

The thing about the media and politicians nowadays is their tendency of not being straight all the way down the line.

1242.

When the future is far away from us, we're little inclined to envision it, despite the bubbling, far-reaching hopes of youth, as lived experience. But as long as we're alive, it never fails to realize itself as such or creep or bound up to us with or without some conscious act of comparison to the past. As much as this change or transition enters our consciousness, we will take stock of expectations met or not, perhaps being reminded all the while that, not being what it once was, it can only come again as a fresh discovery and disappointment.

1243

The future is the power of the past pushing to and through the present as its ongoing realization, its self-destructive recreation.

1244.

A U.S. presidential debate is two opposing and highly exaggerated accounts of what the incumbent of the highest office has achieved and failed at.

1245.

A U.S. presidential debate is an exchange of low blows that allows all commentators to occupy the moral high ground in a way that lays waste to the idea of there being any middle ground.

1246.

If dying were as easy as falling asleep, if it no longer held any horror for us, who would not slip away in a dream (or dream-like

state) or burn up like a moth in a flame?

1247.

Standing armies are slaughterhouses in the making, if not for one generation then another. There are many means of making them part of an honourable and even glorious profession but, apart from these long-term practises that effectively divert attention from the end result, what horror haunts these standing armies as a common, almost pedestrian feature of history books, of what is necessary for a people's or nation's protection and even survival, of rules and regulations inscribed in institutions going back to antiquity, can be psychologically distanced and even eliminated by carrying out a series of peacetime military manoeuvres and parade square drills (which new recruits thrown into battle sorely miss out on) that play counterpoint to battlefield losses like sailing on smooth seas to shipwrecks.

1248.

To hold onto power, many or most political leaders are willing to take the occasional mud bath because, if they win most of their

battles or don't lose the most important ones, they know they can maintain a sort of scrubbed respectability.

1249.

Yes, the rule is a powerful thing but so is the exception that, either highly placed or highly effective, can lead to the propagation of itself or the extinction of all.

1250.

It may be that societies or peoples, being stricken, must also hit rock bottom before being able to look up.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

1251-1300

1251.

Thank God for the accumulated knowledge and wisdom of yesteryear! For if we had to depend solely on what we get from today, foolishness running to insanity would have already gone by us at warp speed.

1252.

Certain ideas and events generate interest to such an extent that the conversation about them can go on for generations and eventually transform their character from the morally certain to uncertain. At the same time, there is an ongoing process of return to the former by way of viewing a past good as present wrong or a past wrong as present good. Taken as a whole, the contradictory and convoluted nature of morality seems to get straightened out with this reversal which, undoubtedly responding to certain needs and purposes of the present, must

abstain from recognizing the latter's power over the past and willingness to persecute as much as honour it.

1253.

The day all corruption is gone from politics is the day to believe its pie-in-the-sky promises.

1254.

COVID-19 aphorism: Giving the people a universal fear they can't verify for themselves and then pounding it into their heads day and night is a recipe for waking up to a hellish world where politicians have got drunk with power.

1255.

Think of all the energy expended in human affairs, be it in times of peace or in times of war, that extends itself to the moment of its virtual non-being, that is, its virtual non-traceability in human affairs.

1256.

Perhaps it's the fact that complete scoundrels can so easily come to power that makes it so easy for leaders of opposing parties or enemy nations to treat each other as such.

1257.

Take a look at how the First World War got started. Take a look at what can only be called civilized monstrosity. Take a look at all those leaders who, with their high-level responsibilities and large-scale plans, put into play a war machine that, Frankenstein-like, escaped their control and devastated the world.

1258.

In public affairs, interest of the most general but contentious sort lies at the extremes not only in the sense of where to find it but what to expect from it.

1259.

Aiming at riches and recognition is always but a hair's breadth away from making the sort of compromises that are but a few steps removed from the slightly or sharply descending path of corruption.

1260.

COVID-19 aphorism: Far more dangerous than the coronavirus (or, for that matter, climate change) is the corruption of our institutions as moral bastions of society. Without these pillars of civilized commerce and behaviour, our fate will surely take the form of which Yeats speaks when he announces in his poem, *The Second Coming*: “Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold / Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.”

1261.

COVID-19 aphorism: With a both political and popular movement moving the moral compass towards having the highest level of safety for all, we may unwittingly create a monstrous situation

posing the greatest threat of all.

1262.

During the First World War, Albert Einstein was amazed at the number of eminent scientists, scholars, and statesmen who were willing to jump on the bandwagon of German imperialism. What this indicates along with other historical examples of widespread compliance and complicity is the fact that, when the political winds are blowing strongly, few people want to feel them in their faces instead of squarely on their backs.

1263.

What is death if not leaving our human form to return to where we came from by taking us from hellish end conditions to heavenly ones?

1264.

There is an amazing homogeneity in the way in which

professional news is produced and packaged nowadays. The trust and mistrust it engenders and spreads throughout the land are equally impassioned and self-righteous.

1265.

In war, the aggressor often starts off with a series of quick easy victories, but if it ends with his failure to defeat all forces on the field and the enemy still occupying the moral high ground, it will be he who ends up with the bloodiest nose.

1266.

In controversial and contentious matters, even the best of heads can take a few cheap shots. Three reasons for this falling off might be the following: First, no speaker, no matter how brilliant, can have a thorough grasp of every aspect of a subject. Second, where discussion is of a polemical nature, people and positions that are merely in proximity of the enemy camp are often lumped in which, of course, is an injustice, and third, maintaining a certain rhetorical tone and tenor, whether it be self-righteous, indignant, angry, or merely critical, can hardly avoid the

convenience and opportunism of clutching at low-hanging fruit from time to time.

1267.

The dreams we have at night give us an insight into what the world would be like if, first, we were suddenly deprived of a few natural laws or logical relations and, second, we still found our lives sufficiently meaningful to want to get somewhere or to the bottom of something.

1268.

The ego in deepest slumber is a less a matter of amorous adventures, of victories achieved, of grandiose plans and projects than of simply trying to best navigate in the dream world and make sense of it.

1269.

“The thousands of people who die every day from war, disease, and other causes are not our brothers and sisters but rather

phantom creatures,” said one who, for fear of public ridicule, preferred to remain anonymous. “Only those whom we have known and loved can ever rise to the level of consanguineous recognition, solidarity, and bonding that allows them, even in death, to take on flesh.”

1270.

Teaching a population to be unnecessarily fearful is just as foolish or nefarious as not warning them sufficiently about a grave danger.

1271.

If a moralist is someone who necessarily elevates himself while lowering others, then there is an inherent contradiction in his sociopsychological makeup always capable of turning virtue to vice, good to evil.

1272.

What seems to be in the air nowadays is the faith that human

beings can improve their relations to an almost unheard-of degree by wedding sensitivity with social responsibility. What seems to be ignored at the same time are the forces both inside and outside of us that, after a long or even a short sleep, can suddenly erupt.

1273.

Politics is where the idealistic secretly meets and makes love with the unscrupulous while violently disowning it.

1274.

COVID-19 aphorism: The thinking of all governments in the world today seems to be: “Now that people are fearful, let’s keep it that way because anger as hate speech is wholly unacceptable.”

1275.

All governments do bad shit. However, it’s only later ones that admit this by blaming past ones for having fucked up.

1276.

Philosophy, which has been around for over two thousand years and upholds truth as its highest value, has a history full of arguments and counterarguments, both great and small. Its history is, indeed, essentially these arguments without end. Now, take politics. Does anyone seriously think that, given philosophy's track record, political thought or theory will lead to anything conclusive? Does anyone believe that, whether it be under the auspices of the so-called left or right, political argument will lead to a conclusion which is separate from, if one is lucky, a leap of faith taking us towards values and practises that sustain a people for a certain period of time or, if one is unlucky, a play of forces that manage to coerce and enthrall a people for, once again, a certain period of time?

1277.

From being an ideologue to becoming a revolutionary is the step from thinking all opponents to be wrong to thinking them not only wrong but dangerous.

1278.

Perhaps the best way to distinguish a conspiracy theorist who, in line with the popular sense of the term, is a charlatan and one who isn't is to ask oneself: does this person lay claim to a perfect or near-perfect knowledge of the subject? If so, then he must give full and due evidence of this. If he fails in doing so, then he can be safely dismissed.

1279.

The rallying cry of a straight talking, no-holds-barred revolutionary might be: "Tear it up by the very roots! This system of government is a vile, poisonous plant! Whatever grows after it, no matter how bitter its fruit may be, will surely be better than this monstrosity!"

1280.

It is to be noted that large-scale reforms are quite often popular with those who, if sacrifices are involved, get off lightly.

1281.

This eternally imperfect world: Feeling empathy for others, if it's the slightest bit false (and this is often the case when the talk is about the sufferings of a large number of faceless others), is only a hair's breadth away from taking one's own feelings to be the measure of all things and the pole towards which all else should gravitate. On the other hand, having no empathy for others, and, in particular, for that large number of faceless others, always runs the risk of becoming monstrous when combined with power and, in particular, with great power.

1282.

***The Communist Manifesto* is where begins that great discourse which, in the area of politics, allows what is essentially religious to pose as being scientific.**

1283.

How can politicians teach us about morality when so few of them teach it by example?

1284.

Technology, optimistically viewed, is what is forever improving the human condition. Technology, pessimistically viewed, is what is waiting for the next monster to take it over.

1285.

Thinking that technology, any kind of technology (and this includes systems of government), will save us from catastrophe which has its seeds in the human heart and, to put it in the most far-reaching way, the mind of God, is the greatest delusion there can be.

1286.

As history shows, all great plans to improve the world must falter and perhaps even fail, at least, morally or humanly speaking, when they have to deal with the issue of what to do with those who get in the way or even seem to get in the way of their realization.

1287.

The problem with most politicians is they are technocrats at heart who only give second consideration to matters of the heart.

1288.

If there ever comes a day when public figures, eminent or not-so eminent, spend at least ten per cent of their time engaged in self-critique as opposed to merely criticizing others, there will be correspondingly at least ten times more honesty in the world.

1289.

It seems to be the default position of many on the left that, if someone is on the right, they must be either less moral or intelligent than they are. Along with those who think there is nothing wrong with this attitude or outlook, the people who hold this superior view of themselves must be, unwilling as they are to engage in any radical self-critique, bereft of the most sensitive moral antennae.

1290.

What if it were true that all the greatest benefits to humanity are indissociably linked to its greatest crimes? What if all the greatest empires throughout history – Egyptian, Greek, Roman, French, English, Russian, and so on – bore ample testimony to this terrifying, intolerable, unforgiveable, and therefore largely ignored fact?

1291.

Anything taken to extremes becomes a negative. Today we have a collective preoccupation with safety and security (not to mention comfort) that promises to turn some future crisis into a catastrophe.

1292.

Yes, political courage and wisdom exist but all too often not before the catastrophe, child of their absence, is upon us.

1293.

The future, be it near at hand or as distant as can be, is full of those elements or activities that, either coming together or falling apart, either happening as predictable outcomes or operating as secret processes, constitute what we call events great and small, as well as history, development, progress, decline, death, and rebirth.

1294.

What is morality? Many things but one thing it must surely be is an opportunity for a good many people to feel superior to a good many others.

1295.

A few hours before the storm broke, it was sunny and beautiful. A week or so before the stock market crashed, the general mood was confident and optimistic.

1296.

If everyone could be judged on the basis of a single, inappropriate act, who should 'scape whipping?

1297.

One should not confuse science or knowledge with wisdom. The first is proper for following specific paths to success; the second for not only weighing success and failure as cohabitants in this world, but also for coming to terms with this.

1298.

Self-interest masked as social concern is so widespread that even its most crass if not grotesque manifestations in the political and corporate world must be regarded as a form of self-protection that can only come from belonging to the herd.

1299.

One anomaly in the present-day pedagogy is that, while youngsters are taught to reject violence, hate, and prejudice in the real world, total immersion and engagement in a virtual one that parallels these forbidden elements on the level of fantasy meets with little or no disapproval.

1300.

If we are to believe geologists, paleontologists, and natural historians, we are the crowning achievement of catastrophe or, rather, a series of catastrophes. On the other hand, if one rejects this anthropocentric view . . .

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

1301-1350

1301.

A herd of lies, however overwhelming, will eventually give way to the truth that stands head and shoulders above them. Were it not so, we would have perished long ago.

1302.

It can always come about that some piece of stupidity upsets and even destroys the most complex, sophisticated, and powerful organization. A sufficiently large rock hurtling through space and hitting this planet would be an example of such obtuseness, albeit at the cosmic level.

1303.

There is not a project on Earth, no matter how worthy of

endorsement, that isn't subject to being botched by clumsy hands, weakened by corruption, or, if it's built on lofty ideals and expectations, debased by popular demand.

1304.

Marxism, along with what is called nowadays cultural Marxism, mixes with morality in a way that, taking advantage of the human all too human at all four points of the compass, that is, as diverse longings and aspirations, as desire for power, revenge, security, simplicity, novelty, justice, the greater good, etc., makes it both the anti-scientific pseudo-science and the anti-religious pseudo-religion par excellence.

1305.

With less bedazzlement at our own technological achievements, we would realize that nature itself is advanced technology – indeed, hyper-advanced technology – from beginning to end.

1306.

He who thinks he can win his argument by insults has more faith in the power of the second than the first.

1307.

Public opinion so powerful it influences politicians and policy makers is also the steamroller than flattens even professional opinion, its erstwhile critic and corrector.

1308.

Every time we go to sleep at night and dream whatever dreams we do, a remarkable yet little noted thing occurs, namely, the slipping away of the meaning and importance of our wakeful lives, the primary “who” of what we are, the all-enveloping embrace of logical relations and natural laws. Who can deny that all this gets phantomized every night and, what is more, almost voluptuously and without regret?

1309.

When considering the truthfulness of politicians and political pundits in the mainstream media, it would be wise to include two important factors that could very well have a bearing on the matter: power and profit.

1310.

If there is any virtue in vice, it must be that the latter is quicker to attract attention than the former, particularly those vices like hypocrisy that are good at parading as virtues.

1311.

A: Your distrust of the media coverage of the COVID crisis goes too far. There are experts on the TV every day telling us how serious it is.

B: I myself have heard experts on YouTube who also tell us how serious it is but, mind you, in a much different way and for different reasons.

A: YouTube! Why should what you hear there be any more truthful than what is heard on the TV?

B: A fair question. Let me explain. I hear experts on YouTube who speak against the current restrictions which they think are doing and will do – for a long time to come, I might add – much more harm than good. They have nothing to gain by speaking out like this and, indeed, quite often a lot to lose.

A: Do you think the experts who come on TV and who are in the majority are all liars? That's ridiculous!

B: I don't know – and I don't think you know – if they're in the majority. It may only seem like they are. But even if it's true they're in the majority, what is supposed to matter in science are arguments and evidence. Why don't we see these arguments and evidence on TV from the other side so that both sides are given?

A: I've heard a few arguments from your side but, alright, not too much. It's so obvious we have this threat we don't have to hear them. My God, in case you didn't know, almost a million people have died from it!

B: Almost a million people die on this planet every week, with or without COVID. And the people I'm talking about come from every age group in a way that's certainly not the case with this pandemic.

A: It's useless to argue with you. You have your opinion, I have mine. I believe what I hear in the mainstream media because everyone couldn't be lying about it.

B: I would never claim that everyone is lying about it, but the media has the power to let some voices be heard and shut out others. The issue is so big with such serious consequences in so many different ways and for so many different people that this neglect on the part of the media is, in my opinion, a travesty.

1312.

COVID-19 aphorism: Fear of the virus! Fear of social disapproval! Fear of heavy fines! My, my, what a triple whammy the politicians have now in their arsenal!

1313.

A: I wouldn't want it on my conscience that, by making my life safer in any way, shape, or form, I was sacrificing the lives of much younger people in any way, shape, or form.

B: Oh, come on! Most people don't look at it that way. It's rather everyone pulling together to make the world safe for all of us.

A: The vast majority of governments, including related institutions, are run by technocrats who, unfortunately, a sizeable number of people think are god-like, if not in the best of times, then in the worst, which is exactly the worst time – the very worst time! – to think of them as god-like.

B: They mean the best for us, I'm sure. If you say anything else, I'll call you a conspiracy theorist.

A: They want the best for all of us and they want the best for themselves. In unprecedented times, the first can be a misguided attempt at social engineering and the second a secure if not greater hold on power.

B: I knew it! You are a conspiracy theorist!

A: And you, my friend, are a fool for not recognizing that the danger of the times can present itself in more ways than one.

1314.

History teaches us that mass stupidity, both political and popular, is making a bad situation worse to the point the only cure for it is catastrophe.

1315.

Is it possible for a scholar to show great intellectual depth and insight in one area and be entirely superficial and ignorant in another? Just make him a public figure who is expected to expound on a whole range of issues.

1316.

Those who pay their respects to the dead are oftentimes those who only wish to keep the respect of the living.

1317.

Truth is highly valued but, when it comes to the telling of it, it's as volatile as it becomes political, which is at least part of the time, and as malleable as sociable, which is most of the time.

1318.

Now that science is mixing more and more with politics, it is

committing its most egregious error: thinking itself free of error.

1319.

COVID-19 aphorism: Nowadays one can observe two modern-day obsessions on almost every street corner: people wearing masks and playing with cell phones and all doing so at the same time.

1320.

Overall, she was a good person, but one of her faults was trying to moralize her way out of mediocrity rather than match it (and thereby make herself more attractive) with modesty.

1321.

Lying halfway between argument and art, the aphorism is less inclined to try to win over or against another, although this may be lurking in the background. Concomitantly or compensatorily, it may try to win against itself.

1322.

Love and hate are both strong emotions having more in common with each other than they have with either interest or indifference.

1323.

There is this huge indebtedness that is hardly ever admitted or thought about, namely, the particular or personal identity bequeathed to us by so many both living and dead, great and small.

1324.

One of the tricks of the media is to feed on the fringes of where the majority of people have their concerns, making what will ultimately prove to be marginal or transitory (barring a few exceptions) seem of greatest importance.

1325.

With the possible exception of the most ruthless dictators, the Achilles' heel of virtually all politicians is the gap between what they promise they will do once in power and what they end up doing or not doing, a weakness that will surely be exploited by their adversaries at every turn.

1326.

Breaking away from routine by way of leisure, love, or adventure is a grace for many if not all people because it slows down and even makes disappear for a while the ruthless march of time.

1327.

Perhaps propaganda of one kind or another is necessary in human affairs if for no other reason than being the most effective short-term way to counter the worst of it.

1328.

In the immediate present, we have this intense feeling that there is a great divide between real life and make-believe or fiction. But wait a few years and, with the work of memory, this chasm will close and, in some instances, be no more than a thin or blurry line.

1329.

The intellectual life of the majority of people in the modern world doesn't extend much further than the TV set.

1330

Celebrity status makes smart people stupid when they forget their ignorance in a bid to flaunt their knowledge.

1331.

Many issues considered to be of utmost importance today will

vanish tomorrow like snow on a summer's day, more forgotten than resolved.

1332.

The art of politics is telling the truth as much as it is an advantage to do so (and, of course, the better one is at this, the greater the political rewards), telling a lie only when not doing so would be politically damaging or even disastrous, and, finally, manoeuvring between these two extremes the many times that avoiding a firm commitment, keeping an ally, or deceiving an enemy is the main objective.

1333.

The fiat currency of the moral world are those words that keep their value for a time even after having abandoned the gold standard of humane and honourable conduct.

1334.

It is possible that, for a nation, a government, an institution, an enterprise, a group of people, an individual, some method of operation or way of functioning is so profitable that, despite its showing every sign of eventually falling apart with disastrous consequences, it is held to with as much desperate energy and hopeful hopelessness as a drowning man floundering in an open sea and seeing his salvation in a scrap of wood.

1335.

Criticizing somebody or something without understanding or even attempting to understand is as common as dirt.

1336.

Where great power is in play and huge sums of money are at stake, evil has a garden from which to produce its most poisonous plant. The tempting, sweet-tasting fruit of this monstrosity, at least for a goodly number of people, (and, oh, how subtly it sets its trap for them!) is hearing it said from supposedly

reliable and authoritative sources that all who are willing to tend this garden and see it prosper are good and all who don't – all who may even harm it in some way by their contrary words and actions, their criticism and lack of cooperation – evil.

1337.

We have as our language a vast book of words and expressions in our heads unjustifiably discounted or devalued every time we think we have a poor memory.

1338.

When a politician lies but smiles, the average person sees the smile but not the lie. When he lies with a serious look on his face, he sees not a mask falsifying things but one so well-fitting it must be a true reflection of them.

1339.

If one has any doubts that, despite their grandiose plans for saving the planet, politicians haven't really put this at the top of

their agenda, one should ask oneself why it is that, after more than seventy years, it's still bristling with nuclear weapons.

1340.

Politics becomes tragedy not to mention cruelty, injustice, and inhumaneness when the thinking becomes: crush or be crushed.

1341.

Politics is a double-edged sword easily swinging between beneficence and barbarism.

1342.

If the majority of people didn't feel so little drama in their lives, the media would soon be out of business.

1343.

Thank God for every new generation that, even though it can be easily indoctrinated, still tends to put personal experience (certainly not an answer to all things but definitely an antidote to some) above everything else.

1343.

The media no longer speaks truth to power but only the truth that power wishes to be spoken. Such is the tendency, at any rate, and, as far as maintaining a free society goes, it doesn't bode well.

1344.

When it comes to looking after oneself and managing one's life from day-to-day, an area of expertise is in evidence that, whether this life be considered ruined, rich, or run-of-the-mill, is both common and unique: common as a development for everyone and unique as one person's.

1345.

COVID-19 aphorism: My thought is this: All started with political and medical mistakes being made which quickly got out of control and have grown so large and complex that leaders now cannot change direction without damaging their personal, professional, or political lives. They have no choice, in other words, but to double down, institute a culture of worry and concern (not to mention fear), expand the parameters of social responsibility, and, finally, do everything in their power to discredit those who are unwilling to cooperate.

1346.

COVID-19 aphorism: The real virus afflicting society today is the fear which surrounds the pandemic and operates on a number of levels, cutting across society from top to bottom.

1347.

COVID-19 aphorism: Could it be that, many years from now, the politicians of today, in their dealing with the problems related to

the coronavirus, will be likened to the firefighter who, after starting a blaze, rushes back onto the scene later to take credit for putting it out?

1348.

COVID-19 aphorism: The immense harm the media is doing nowadays can be summed up by two principles: the first is that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing and the second that the first not only applies to many different subjects but also to hundreds of millions if not billions of people.

1349.

Misinformation at the popular level or anywhere else is a bad thing but the misleading or untruthful statements of those in authority can be ten, a hundred, a thousand, indeed, a million times worse.

1350.

To those who load their talk with abusive language and non-

sequiturs, one could respond: “And why don’t you throw in the kitchen sink? It would fit in perfectly with the rest of your argument!”

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

1351-1400

1351.

On at least one level, the elites of the world and the majority come together: their proclivity to mediocre thinking in the moral sphere.

1352.

Both the prison and the psychiatric hospital open ever wider their doors when the authorities find new ways to determine who and what are threats to society.

1353.

For the sake of the millions of people already in this world and those who are yet to come, every TV set should have a sign on it reading: "Health warning! The media is not your friend!"

1354.

If one were to draw up a list of all the cruel and crazy things that governments have done in the name of either protecting or improving society which, of course, includes everything government, it would, to quote Shakespeare, “a tale unfold whose lightest word would harrow up thy soul.”

1355.

A: Everybody wearing masks today looks miserable. All you can see is their big eyes that blink.

B: But they’re doing this, putting up with a bit of discomfort and inconvenience, because they’re socially concerned, don’t you agree?

A: I agree they’re socially concerned and putting up with something, but I’m not sure it’s worth the price.

B: What do you mean?

A: The price of emptying the world of millions of smiles.

Covid-19 aphorism: How can we account for this blind obedience to authority that not only takes in the broad masses but many of the most intelligent, rational members of society? How can we understand this strange mixture of collective insanity and collective lucidity that allows a society to function more or less efficiently while depriving its members of the power of critical thinking on at least one or two levels? How can we get to the nub of the matter without going straight to the profoundly social and psychological dimension, without putting aside the moral one which, although important in its own right, cannot be other than a hindrance to getting the basic view of this perplexing, discomforting, and even deranging phenomenon?

Surely, then, there is a logic in this madness which must be looked at. Surely it must belong to a context in which, by and large, people aren't misled by the authorities and therefore have good reason to trust them. Surely, it must involve a kind of reasoning which goes as follows: "Unlike some opponent or critic of the government, the people in authority are those who must take responsibility for their words and deeds. If they mislead us, they risk bad consequences not only for us but for themselves. Therefore, it is not in their interest, especially in important

matters, to fool us and, conversely, it is not in our interest not to believe them. Finally, it follows as night follows day that belief in the authorities, in conjunction with respecting the rules they set down, is the best way to go forward and bring about a favourable outcome.”

Is the above not sound reasoning? Does it not speak of a sensible way of operating in the world? Is there anything in it that could be construed as being the slightest bit foolish or demented? Of course not, and in most instances, it could even be viewed as a sort of collective wisdom.

Whence comes then this notion of a collective departure from reason? Whence comes this seemingly outlandish claim that sensible beliefs and habits, sensible ways of reasoning all of a sudden take on a theatre-of-the-absurd look? Whence if not from history when, at various times, the rules of the game have suddenly changed with few people being aware of it? With the majority thinking the old rules pertaining to government intentions and reliability were still in place?

For the fact of the matter is that governments can blunder and, if these blunders are big enough, lead to a sea change in how they view their own interests in relation to the interests of those they govern. Now, instead of following the general rule of truthfulness to be on the safe side of things, it is the lie that comes to the

fore and promises, at least for the short-term, political, professional, and personal salvation. But this lie must of course come in the form of a successful coverup which denies any lying, any wrongdoing, any mistakes, and any fact or testimony which conflicts with the image of an actively benevolent, well-functioning government. It is this more or less successful coverup, effectuated in many ways, which is the key to understanding this madhouse look of present-day society where people, while accepting ever more indignities in the name of protecting themselves and others, no longer ask questions.

1357.

The left has the tendency of tilting over into lunacy, the right into cold-blooded indifference, and both into full-blown, paranoiac intolerance. However, these tendencies must be nurtured by either crisis or conquest before they can really become something.

1358.

It is a core principle of many people that one shouldn't do things simply because there is pressure from the outside or because it is relatively safe and secure not to resist those who wish to force their will upon them. In times of bad government, it is essential that such people be counted and call to account those who betray their trust. Otherwise, authoritarian and dictatorial elements, with the machinery of the state at their disposal, will run right over them.

1359.

There are conspiracy theories for the simple reason there have been and always will be plots, machinations, coups, etc. However, the idea that one or a few people could take over the world, a seemingly popular notion these days, flies in the face of all history where, for every string of victories a leader, a party, or a nation has had, there have also been at least one or two unpredictable elements leading to errors of judgement and displays of outright stupidity.

1360.

The people are like a sea that can allow even the most vile leader or dictator to sail about majestically but also, with a sudden change of fortune, send him, his vessel, and all his affairs to the bottom.

1361.

Who doubts that, after the Nazis took power in Germany in 1933, honesty and openness in political matters became a highly risky affair? And who doubts that this didn't affect virtually all members of society, including many of the most refined and knowledgeable? And, finally, who doubts that this lack of truthfulness on a grand scale wasn't quickly covered over by everyone committing themselves to protecting the nation and its interests?

1362.

The science of the day is only as good as the scientists who practise it. If the second can be corrupted, so can the first.

Likewise, the information of the day is only as good as those who provide it. If they become dishonest, what chance does it have of being reliable?

1363.

Distractions are a common ploy of those who have weak or no arguments.

1364.

People who insult and abuse others in the name of fighting injustice believe they occupy the moral high ground which up to a point is true, but certainly not as a long-term benefit or beneficence, being that, as is commonly said, actions speak louder than words.

1365.

In a long military struggle, it's hard to stay motivated without believing God is on one's side in some form or other.

1366.

People who fudge on their principles only have short and long-term gains of a material sort in their sights, the subtler losses resulting from a slow erosion of character falling outside their radar.

1367.

A: Nowadays political parties shape their policies more in accordance with polls than principles. If that isn't corruption, I don't know what is.

B: Oh, forget that! It's climate change that matters. Without the planet, what matters the rest?

A: Without principles, what matters the rest?

1368.

Short roadmap from the authoritarian to the unthinkable: The first "official" position is: if to make the world safer and more secure for all, our opponents must be called a few names, so be it. The second: if to make the world safer and more secure for all, our opponents must be treated a bit roughly, so be it. The third: If

to make the world safer and more secure for all, our opponents must be viewed as harmful to society, so be it. The fourth: if to make the world safer and more secure for all, our opponents must lose some of their rights, so be it. The fifth: if to make the world safer and more secure for all, our opponents must be eliminated, so be it.

1369.

It would seem that some sort of struggle is needed to fill up a life even if it involves a downward course with dwindling returns.

1370.

When a person can do little more than rattle off a series of accusations, when he does so repeatedly with little or no argument, when his language is full of the loathing of others and self-satisfaction from being able to judge and condemn them (if not before others, then at least in his own eyes) it is certain, if he truly believes what he's saying, that he has much in himself he would like to see somewhere else.

1371.

Millions of TV viewers throughout the world today are being fooled into believing they're getting not only information and entertainment on their sets, but also a good education.

1372.

If one wishes to know what is right or wrong with the world, it is better to listen to a few choice individuals than to institutions. While all gross errors and grotesquerie are likely to be avoided by the second (but there are monstrous exceptions), operating with utmost integrity isn't their top priority.

1373.

Most people's expertise runs no further than their own little world. Politicians can take advantage of this by being the false teachers and prophets of the larger one.

1374.

Decrepit old age can't go on for too long, and no doubt this consideration, along with others of a moral sort, keeps it a forbidden topic insofar as the question can be raised: "Why does it go on at all?"

1375.

TV watching is like eating junk food in that it's both pleasing and filling (not to mention addictive), but at some cost to one's health.

1376.

COVID-19 aphorism: Both the coronavirus and climate change camouflage corruption. We would do well to focus on the latter for, if unchecked, it's far more likely to lead to catastrophe.

1377.

Everyone and no one is an expert on current events.

1378.

With social media nowadays, there is the possibility of finding someone who talks honestly about a matter and who, moreover, is very knowledgeable about it. The same cannot be said for mainstream media with all its talking heads and so-called experts who, along with overstepping the limits of their knowledge, must buy into a prevailing narrative.

1379.

For someone who wields moral authority but hasn't developed a sense of self-criticism, there is the danger of ending up (especially if a sense of humour is also missing) taking on the role of supreme judge of humanity.

1380.

The greatest lies are those that, becoming official, permit no discussion or raising of questions.

1381.

Thank God that the vast majority of words come into being without politics but only as the perfect fit of sound and sense, the inbuilt poetry of every language.

1382.

If one wants to find the truth about a matter, particularly a complex one, all points of view should be open to discussion and debate. Ultimately, this is what happens, but the process is held up by those who already know it.

1383.

The totalitarian impulse starts with the belief that one is in

possession of the truth and has a mission to change the world. If unstable conditions result in the propagation of this belief, it becomes the nitroglycerine of human affairs.

1384.

The present is given to telling lies to itself, the past and future to collaborating to correct it.

1385.

The world-changing mission as it is presented nowadays, not only by politicians but also by many others, seems to be popular for the reason that, while promising the coming of a near-perfect or at least highly improved world which of course is merely a variant of an age-old idea, it does so without asking much in return. At least, it seems to be proffered as something that doesn't require more than putting up with a few inconveniences and, as far as making any substantial sacrifices, nothing seems to be on the horizon. Whether this popular idea of a general mission for humanity continues to thrive is no doubt dependent on keeping things within the comfort zone of most people. In

light of this, politicians definitely have their work cut out for them.

1386.

COVID-19 aphorism: With respect to the current crisis, mainstream media has morphed into a machine of propaganda capable of the most incomplete, one-sided, fear-driven and fear-laden reporting that has ever been done in peacetime. Although not the only culprit to blame for the current mess (for the virus is but the finger of the whole arm), it will surely have to admit one day, if it has not done so already, that it has taken a wrong turn from which it will likely never recover.

1387.

The greatest danger to society comes not from those who are powerful, desperate, or wrong but all three together.

1388.

While the present provides a platform for lies and deception, the study of the past and the work of the future provide one for truth.

1389.

Intellectual thought is not immune to being influenced and even corrupted.

1390.

Politics is never so removed from prejudice that it should ever be allowed to pose as pure reason.

1391.

A consumerist society with the greatest benefits of capitalism and the greatest control methods of communism is what the new world order seems to be with a major selling job going on to convince everybody it's the best of all possible worlds.

1392.

A: I distrust a scholar who speaks as if every word he utters cannot be contested.

B: But there are many thinkers and teachers, authors of great books, who fall into this category.

A: No doubt they think they've earned the right to it. But here great knowledge and learning fall short by forgetting one can always make a fool of oneself.

1393.

The total number of people alive today and all those yet to be born will always be a minority, indeed, a shrinking minority of all those who have already died and all those who will. According to scientists, some 107 billion people have already swollen their ranks.

1394.

Never does evil have freer rein than when done in the name of good and, as a corollary to this, never greater power than when

done by government.

1395.

Political, popular, scientific, and medical madness have finally caught up with economic insanity as a general deterioration in society that is also generational in a both directional and consequential sense.

1396.

COVID-19 aphorism: A collective hubris has smitten the politicians of today right and left, north and south, east and west. They have come to believe they can control everything, even the future. But let them open a history book to discover that, no matter how successful they may be for a time, their fate is ultimately one of being ungraciously and even severely treated by those who write their stories.

1397.

COVID-19 aphorism: To live today is to realize how many

politicians, when threatened with a situation involving their most vital interests, are willing to betray public trust by playing on it.

1398.

COVID-19 aphorism: The current pandemic has allowed all the would-be Caesars to come out of the closet but, at the same time, revealed their hidden motive for getting into politics.

1399.

According to Alonzo, the Duke of Vienna in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, those who follow their own harsh rules have something to say in their defence while those who don't are tyrants. Today we have politicians and other leaders who, at private gatherings in many luxurious settings, don't abide their own strict rules. Unless they maintain their cohesion as a group and increase their power over others to an unheard of degree, their fate has already been marked down.

1400.

With short-term smartness but long-term stupidity, politicians are best kept in check when they keep themselves in check. Failing this, they unite as fools, doing all a great disservice.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

1401-1450

1401.

The campaign to fight hate speech on social media and other platforms is but the latest move of certain authorities to convince us of their mission to stamp out evil. But given their habit of breaking their own rules and other signs of mischief, it's more likely they simply wish to "write 'good angel' on the devil's horn."

1402.

All things being equal, a person who doesn't materially benefit from upholding a certain position on issues of national or international importance but in fact risks personal or professional loss by speaking out against them is much more likely to be telling the truth than one who does.

1403.

Every person has strengths and weaknesses that, if any one of them were universalized, would ruin the world for us.

Unidimensionality would only be tolerable if we viewed ourselves at both the lowest and highest level imaginable, that is, as bee or ant-like creatures capable of infiltrating and investigating the multitudinous aspects of being itself.

1404.

In times such as these, moral weight and authority must come from the people. If anyone thinks it will come from heads of state or institutions, he will be sadly disappointed. For while it's true that, generally speaking, moral development and sensibility are no less part of their character than that of others, it's also true they don't put these attributes into play on a regular basis but rather, for the sake of expediency and self-interest, trim their sails to the prevailing moral winds.

1405.

COVID-19 aphorism: One day it will be written down that the politicians of today felt an existential threat not from a new strain of virus going around the world but rather from a few billion people who, despite or rather because of TVs ablaze about it twenty-four-seven for months on end, didn't get the best information.

1406.

COVID-19 aphorism: It is to the immense discredit of politicians and other powerful figures that, by endlessly repeating a message largely relying on fear and coercion, millions of people have come to believe nonsense.

1407.

How can there be so much intelligence, refinement, and sophistication in the world and, at the same time, so much stupidity? It seems to be that, while the first require the slow, steady, step-by-step development of whole areas of

understanding, the second only requires the presumption of being able to arrive at these areas, or at least a few of them, rather quickly, easily, and – why not? – with popular approval. Morality, politics, and religion are such areas of understanding which engender stupidity in the form of giving expert-like opinions in a herd-like way.

1408.

Perhaps the greatest evil comes from those who, wielding great power, become self-deluded, thinking truth and knowledge spring from them rather than all about them.

1409.

War is legalised mass murder with enough adventure, game, and spectacle in it not only to mitigate its immorality but also “virtualize” its horror.

1410.

For ever so long, the dinosaurs lorded it over the planet. Then one day an asteroid hit it and suddenly all the rules of survival changed.

1411.

Many governments have done bad things in the past and those who were vilified for opposing them have ended up as heroes and moral exemplars.

1412.

COVID-19 aphorism: Science as free and open debate is as far from the minds of those who tell people nowadays to follow it as the Christian message love thy neighbour was from the minds of those who conquered foreign lands.

1413.

Governments having too much control inevitably lead to out-of-

control social or military projects that, if the past is a reliable guide, eventually bring them down.

1414.

Climate change as ideology, as settled science (formerly called global warming but, in the 1970's, treated quite differently as a coming ice age), is a potentially powerful weapon in the hands of politicians. If but one world leader turns out to be pathological in his use of it, it could mean no less than genocide. After all, what prevents some monster from arising in this century (the twentieth certainly had its share!) and deciding to take the matter to its logical conclusion which could also be a “final solution”?

1415.

COVID-19 aphorism: One day it will be written that, contrary to public opinion, there was little evidence all government measures did much good.

1416.

To judge the politicians of today not by their words but their deeds is to see that, while speaking of inclusion, they sow the seeds of division.

1417.

How far can political lunacy go? Well, we all know how far it went in Nazi Germany. A person could be rich, respectable, church-going, highly honoured, of exemplary character, and even a war hero but, if he or she had Jewish grandparents, in mortal danger.

1408.

In dishonest times, the words of a few honest, well-informed friends are worth all the official statements in the world.

1419.

The diversity of this world is so great that it takes in all political, philosophical, moral, and religious projects that, in the name of improving it, would make it the kingdom of the same.

1420.

Accusations without arguments are like armies without supply lines – destined for obliteration.

1421.

Apart from sacred texts, the moral compass of a people isn't an authority or institution but exceptional individuals willing to suffer and perhaps even die for some principle or ideal. But if these individuals come to power and go astray, they automatically pass on to kindred spirits what is absolutely necessary for justice to prevail, namely, that sensitive instrument of the soul so different from sacred texts in that it must constantly recalibrate itself according to changing circumstances and events.

1422.

When one side in a struggle calls for shutting down every news outlet or source of information favouring the other side, it's almost certain it wants not so much to stop misinformation as to have a monopoly on it.

1423.

Totalitarianism is a political movement that ends up being a mass movement by using fear as a both strategic and tactical weapon. It's the most ironic, irrational, and even "cancerous" manifestation of the end-justifies-the-means principle in that, even when its ends are no longer clearly in sight or its means partially dysfunctional, it will still grow or move along with considerable speed and energy. What it's best at is social control that, because the latter degrades the quality of life over time, cannot help but lead to its eventual dissolution.

1424.

Totalitarianism is political genius becoming increasingly

delusional about where it's going and how to get there. When it becomes madness, it officially goes criminal.

1425.

If there are streams of stars with planets like our own, these life-sustaining orbs must be like rare bubbles in space, forever appearing and disappearing.

1426.

Sleep is the body's way of letting the mind routinely visit its innermost sanctums.

1427.

The first casualty of government overreach is its capacity for self-criticism and the second the public's for recognizing this.

1428.

Once dead, it's amazing how quickly we get used to what it was like before we were born.

1429.

If everything taken together is complicated beyond measure, then anything taken separately is also complicated. It is only our limited perception of things that prevents the seemingly simple from revealing its infinitely fine-grained continuity with everything else.

1430.

The amazing beat of the fast-paced here and now seems to trap all moments of greatest significance with its insistent call for our full attention and participation.

1431.

Being obsessed with one's feelings to the exclusion of other considerations is virtually the definition of wrongheadedness.

1432.

A metaphor for many lives throughout history would be having a wonderful time on the ship before it hit the iceberg.

1433.

Totalitarian governments are ultimately committed to only one policy: maintaining themselves in power. As such, any other, however fundamental it may seem, is subject to being modified or even eliminated. Political expediency then leads to a very singular practice that can be summarized as the dictum: "It is the decree of the day that counts."

1434.

Political correctness is particularly popular among politicians when their incompetence or corruption gets them into trouble.

1435.

Totalitarianism is a political and ideological movement that escapes constitutional law by generating popular appeal for international causes that can allow one set of interests to disguise others.

1436.

Just as a great edifice cannot arise out of poor building materials, so a better society out of lies and deception.

1437.

It may be that totalitarianism has a death wish in that, like cancer, it ends up killing its host.

1438.

What political correctness offers politicians and mainstream media is a seemingly unassailable position (one might even call it their default position) with respect to discussing the major issues and events of the day. No matter how complicated these may be, the parties in question can always resort to bringing up a few choice issues (e.g., climate change) that, apart from all questions of truth or falsehood, suggest they have nothing but the best interests of humanity at heart.

1439.

If those discussing a contentious or controversial matter are not willing to hear out and consider opposing points of view, there is little honesty in the conversation.

1440.

Do you really want to know what paradise is? It is a world that has allowed this thought to come into being and perpetuate itself over the ages despite our having to suffer the slings and arrows

of outrageous fortune. Any other possibility, on the human scale at least, would make it no better than a beautiful plastic garden.

1441

Should the politicians of today, paving the way for the great successes of the future, for the happiness and well-being of the generations to come, and, indeed, even for the salvation of the planet itself, should they not be forgiven if they sometimes fail to address current problems? Or if they don't always seem to be honest? Or if they sometimes show an interest in accumulating power? Well, millions upon millions of people will no doubt answer this question with a resounding yes. These people have no reason, in other words, to think that politicians will let things get truly out of hand or that, for example, they will let debt destroy the world economy or nuclear weapons the world itself. Heavens, if one looks at the twentieth century, one must agree that, apart from a few cataclysmic events, politicians ushered in an era of relative peace and security. All the evidence is there, in other words, for the millions upon millions of people who believe that politicians will get it right in the twenty-first century and that even a few world-shaking events, even ones that might turn out to be as catastrophic as the ones just mentioned, will not

block the way to the promised land so often referred to in the speeches of our modern-day prophets.

1442.

Politically speaking, the well-known precept, “The end justifies the means,” has proven throughout history that it can be divine in its conception and diabolic in its execution.

1443.

The way of the world is to crank up certain issues to the point of near hysteria (ones that won't raise an eyebrow years later) while others, like sleeping volcanoes, are left to themselves.

1444.

One good thing one can say about the truth is its unfailingly bringing about a welcome respite from what is the worst in human affairs.

1445.

Being long on accusations but short on arguments is a recipe for short-term gain but long-term loss (e.g., loss of reputation, credibility, and a good conscience). Now given that this practise is so common among politicians, what reason is there to think they will lead us to the promised land?

1446.

It may be that one of the reasons huge numbers of people follow the authorities without asking too many questions is simply economic in nature. Whatever is saved in mental labour, whatever is avoided in the way of straining one's brain over complicated and difficult matters would no doubt be a very welcome thing if, of course, it didn't come at too high a price. All of this may very well be a sort of popular wisdom that works well most of the time when there is good governance and only a few slip ups. However, when a different situation emerges, when things are not so removed from what might be rightly called evil, this insouciance with respect to what the authorities are up to and the way they conduct themselves can come at a huge cost

and take on the dimensions of the greatest foolishness.

1447.

All that is hyper-diversity in this world, especially in the form of animal and plant life, is testimony to the limitless diversity of what is called the Same and, indeed, must be called the Same (despite this limitless diversity), given what would be required otherwise, namely, divine omniscience.

1448.

A: Why didn't you ever get married and have children? Didn't you want to?

B: It's not that I didn't want to. It's simply that I had never made it a priority in life and so it didn't happen.

A: Well, what was your priority then?

B: A perfect marriage between myself and the world. Of course, this too didn't happen, but it's been a terribly long romance.

1449.

For many pundits in the mainstream media, it seems the only difference between those on the right and those on the far right is that the second have the temerity to make their views known.

1450.

For Elvis Presley to be Elvis Presley or, for that matter, for Shakespeare to be Shakespeare, he himself was necessary but not sufficient. What was sufficient for Elvis Presley or Shakespeare to be what he was was nothing less than everything else, namely, the whole world as he himself knew it from birth to death and even beyond.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

1451-1500

1451.

When a close relationship has ended, it can be as if the loved one has departed from this world and happily (all too happily) taken up residence in another.

1452.

In an argument one is always overstepping oneself and in an aphorism trying not to.

1453.

Arguments in general take in as much energy, detail, precision, and relevance as is necessary to persuade others. Aphorisms, on the other hand, are generally of a different order that's also, at least to some degree, a higher one. It's a higher level of integrity

they aim for and arrive at by, first, taking in all aspects of the human condition, second, not letting any of them drop out of sight for the sake of convenience or out of fear of consequences, and, third, never failing to hold up the mirror to the aphoristic nature and style as much as anything else. To this end, escaping moral and metaphysical constraints (as far as possible) along with not concealing their dogmatic and uncertain character is their be all and end all.

1454.

Given that lightheartedness, friendliness, and flexibility will often achieve what hardheadedness and criticism won't, there's nothing to be said against them if they're not at the expense of one's character.

1455.

Generally speaking, insults are used by people who can't argue. Politicians are often examples of this and sometimes monstrous exceptions.

1456.

When there's big money in the game, a straight path won't always go crooked but, barring exceptional circumstances, will still wander from time to time.

1457.

A great though understated and even overlooked difference between human beings and animals is the first's being discreet to the point of obsession about certain bodily functions.

1458.

Many if not most people work hard most of the time but otherwise go on a mental holiday. Ask them something about such-and-such a country or such-and-such a historical figure and they likely won't know. The majority of people are therefore experts in some areas but ignorant in most others. It's unlikely they will admit this, however, if they watch the TV news.

1459.

Contrary to what we often think, people aren't inclined to spend a lot of time thinking about our faults and failings because they have enough of their own to worry about.

1460.

A recipe for a series of rocky relationships is being difficult to please while not pleasing others.

1461.

As strange as it might seem, there are some people who prefer to suffer than be in the same situation day after day even if it's a good one.

1462.

No man can become a god, but there are certainly those who, wielding great power, have taken on the likeness of one and even

the devil himself.

1463.

For the sake of having courage and inspiration in dishonest times, we subscribe to the following maxim: “The truth is like a citadel that, though it be often laid siege to or wracked by mist and storm, awaits the clearing day when, in peaceful repose, it reminds us all of its enduring strength and stability.”

1464.

It should be borne in mind that a corporate decision isn’t necessarily the result of collective knowledge and wisdom (although this might be operating at some level) but perhaps one person’s will simply being forced on others.

1465.

Politicians of all stripes play a short game despite all their talk about the future (cf. the Thousand Year Reich, the death of

capitalism, the saving of the planet, and so on). But how could it be otherwise given that a human life is short, a political career even shorter, and the time to the next election shorter still?

1466.

After a certain age, when one gets information about someone one hasn't heard about for a very long time, one usually has the experience of getting bad news that was more or less expected. In some rare instances, however, if the person seems to be doing well and carrying on as before, it's like hearing about a resurrection.

1467.

When we're very young, it seems that time will stand still to let us have a thrill. When we're older and this illusion's gone, time, now not so much our song, merely rocks along.

1468.

The opinions of others is such a powerful mirror that it not only reflects but shapes us.

1469.

We habitually pass judgement on the faults of others that are often simply bad habits we don't have. This bad habit of ours includes dealing rather leniently with our own.

1470.

The betrayal of the spirit of science can be easily recognized as the claim to having everything settled.

1471.

Anyone who thinks the present age is everything and past ages of no great concern is surely not one of those who, whether he be a historian or not, can't live without experiencing a life much

longer than a biographical or biological one.

1472.

The use of the word 'science' by politicians puts it much closer to an answer based on self-interest than a question based on self-knowledge.

1473.

Thinking one knows the world by watching the news on TV is like thinking one knows the neighbour by listening to gossip.

1474.

Dying is being forced to abandon the strongest habit we have.

1475.

There are perhaps social ills so widespread and deep-rooted the

only cure for them is catastrophe.

1476.

At the start of 1914, Europe was the great chessboard on which the masters of the world played their game. Then, some months later, the war broke out and, after four years of unprecedented slaughter, many of these great players on the political scene weren't around to continue their game.

1477.

If there were to be more fairness in the world, we would have to cast a more critical eye upon ourselves than is currently the case. This is notwithstanding the fact that, for many people and for many reasons, criticizing others is the only way to go.

1478.

Honesty is the best policy except in politics.

1479.

How bizarre these people are who set themselves up as judges who can tell between good and evil but are quick to abuse others! How bizarre then so many of us!

1480.

“What! You say you believe everything you hear on TV about this matter that’s deeply affecting our society because so many experts are in agreement about it? Well, there are many points to consider but let me raise just one: there have been times in the past (cf. slavery, colonialism, eugenics, antisemitism) where experts or so-called experts were in agreement about things. However, if they expressed their views today, we know where they would be!”

1481.

There are not many things in this world one can be sure of but one of them is that the politics surrounding climate change will change more than once, perhaps even a number of times, before

the climate does in any significant way.

1482.

With respect to one's self and no one else, one shouldn't think of one's good deeds and past accomplishments as having more value than pleasant memories and thoughts that, if lucky, one will take to the grave.

1483.

The near future is certainly visible to us as something to be planned for, but the distant future with its lack of content as precise and comprehensive knowledge is as hidden from us as the far side of the moon or, perhaps better, the centre of the sun.

1484.

We tend to think of the future with ourselves as part of it, which partially explains our short-sightedness in this area.

1485.

All the pressing issues of today will one day have gone, but our closeness to them now prevents us from seeing this.

1486.

For the Greater Glory of Rome: The stupidity, corruption, and power-seeking to be found in human affairs seems to be a constant throughout history. Their centre is the city where intrigues abound, like the present-day one of finding ever new ways to discredit those who wish to look into them.

1487.

So much is slandering the political opponent a common practise nowadays that it's only saving grace can be that, with rare exceptions, it doesn't lead to horrible consequences. If there be another, it's that it maintains itself on the same level as professional wrestling.

1488.

Is it possible that corporate capitalism has found a way to claim the moral high ground in human affairs by a new development related to if not genuinely grounded in Marxism? And is it possible this has happened despite the fact it still remains what Marx himself so vehemently opposed, namely, the rich getting richer at the expense of the poor?

1489.

Just as bad decisions cast in bronze can lead to disaster, so good ones put on ice.

1490.

The great trick on the moral scene today is to magnify relatively distant threats or minor social injustices to the exclusion of much nearer or greater ones. The victims of war and poverty, for example, get short shrift because money and power have no place there to erect the façade of a social conscience.

1491.

In politics there are only two policies which perdure: winning at all costs and the end justifies the means.

1492.

Wittgenstein says in the *Tractatus*: “What we cannot talk about, we must pass over in silence.” True, one might agree, as tautology or mystery, but has this ever prevented anyone from talking about what they don’t know? Has it not in fact incited everyone throughout all time, be they theorists, myth-makers, or whatever, to put their two cents in?

1493.

A paradise turned into a hellhole! How does it happen? Just let a war break out.

1494.

There are few heroes if what is understood as the basis of heroism is the willingness to risk much and perhaps all.

1495.

Do the governments of the world, acting in cooperation, always do the right thing? Well, not if one considers such historical events as the Évian-la-Bains Conference where, in 1938, thirty-two countries got together to discuss the problem of the large number of Jews and, in particular, Jewish children who were slotted to leave Germany. It hardly needs to be said that, as humanitarian cause, it failed.

1496.

A system, an institution, a state can afford a certain amount of stupidity. But if the latter ends up, God forbid, running the whole show, then, woe, woe, the “whole” will shortly be out control!

1497.

We have stupid running the planet now and it's only a matter of time before more people realize it can pass itself off as smartness.

1498.

Many would rather have the news spice up their lives than be one hundred per cent accurate. Some, in fact, will settle for fifty per cent and less.

1499.

It's a hateful thing to say, and perhaps only to be said in an aphorism, but without the most frequent, widespread, and harmful affliction humanity knows, there would be hardly any history.

1500.

Few there are who, having to choose between losing their livelihood and living a lie, will opt for the former as the lesser of two evils.

Aphoristic Appendage to *On Truthtelling*

1501-1550

1501

The Achilles' heel of eminence, achievement, and reputation is forgetting one's humble origins (for, ultimately, everyone has these) and being coopted by power.

1502.

That in times of war political leaders of powerful nations are willing to make threats of the most perilous sort and be confident they will be generally applauded shows how unlikely it is that humanity will be able to sustain the belief about progress without at least some major historical "reality check."

1503.

The ongoing conflicts and wars in the world make the idea of saving it from climate change or deadly viruses the biggest, most foolish, and possibly most diabolic joke there is.

1504.

An aphorism should only take in as much detail, precision, information, and so on as to persuade the aphorist his concern for truthfulness overrides his concern for having to persuade others about it.

1505.

Due to a lack of time, energy, and interest, we are far less likely to find out the other side of the story than listen to the one we prefer many times over.

1507.

With great powers at war, the most constant rule is to break rules.

1508.

The habitual lying of politicians and, for that matter, a good many others wouldn't be possible without the huge appetite for false stories and related items of interest.

1509.

However prestigious the institution, it's a mistake to assume it's incapable of making mistakes and sometimes even far worse.

1510.

Working in the criminal system means having to deal with what a lot of poor souls have done in their worst moments.

1512.

How many are those who, leading decent lives, are awake to everything in them but asleep to everything else!

1513.

Let it not be said that one can live without comrades and kin even if it's only ghosts from the past that, at some point, take on these roles.

1514.

If one wants to know the truth of a matter, it is always better to look to those with the highest integrity than to well-oiled corporations, vested interests, or people simply used to getting their palms greased.

1515.

A complex situation still evolving is precisely where the

charlatan or fool (but perhaps one should also include the paid commentator) gives the impression he has it all worked out.

1516.

We are all actors on the world stage with roles that are more or less determined and with scripts that only vary with the scenes we're in (and, of course, it goes without saying some are much better than others). It's a sort of iron law that constitutes our social lives and, without which, we would recognize neither ourselves nor others.

1517.

We all know we are animals but who, since the dawn of civilization, has taken this to heart except those who were stark raving mad and then some?

1518.

With problems too deep of their own making, governments don't turn around, they double down (until the axe falls).

1519.

After the need to take the next breath and a few other vital functions, the one of feeling right about one's self takes precedence.

1520.

Every great philosopher creates a monument of thought that, if one takes into consideration all the critics and commentators who come to it later, has the aspect of both an impregnable castle and a house of cards.

1521.

If it's true almost any idea, custom, principle, or tradition, no matter how well-established or long-lasting, can be challenged and perhaps done away with in the name of truth, it's also true it can be subverted in the name of good, however superficial or self-serving this may be.

1522.

Love and hate are opposites but less unlike each other than indifference.

1523.

The thought that can never go public or at least in the biggest way is that evil is necessary for good but the good, in order to be what it is, must forever deny this even to the point of doing its own mischief.

1524.

As human beings, it seems natural to think of ourselves as being important in the universe. After all, however dispensable we may be in the long run, all signs and indications point to our being, despite our dropping off like flies, its biggest brained ones.

1525.

There is a lot of wisdom to be found in great literary works whereas in lesser works, too tied up with popularity, profit, or politics, it's slighted.

1526.

To be fair, it should be said that care and concern go straight to the top of modern-day society as much as cruelty and corruption.

1527.

Ultimately, respectability depends on not how well one is able to avoid acting crudely, brutishly, or outrageously but how well one prevents others from knowing about it or, at the very least, condemning it.

1528.

**When the right pushes itself to the extreme, it becomes cruel.
When the left does so, it becomes clownish. But just as the cruel
can have its clownish moments, so the clownish its cruel.**

1529.

**Just as it may be said there's a fine line between genius and
insanity, so it may also be said about comedy and cruelty.**

1530.

**Wisdom is not only putting to use what one knows well in the
best possible way but also distinguishing it clearly from what one
doesn't.**

1531.

**Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn spent eight years in Soviet work camps
storing up hardship like honey for later literary use, wisdom, and**

benefit.

1532.

Hearing about the life and death issues of the past will put to sleep a significant number of people who, if actually faced with them, would (with all the intensity to be expected from lived experience) go into panic mode.

1533.

It's a sad fact of life that things sometimes have to get much worse before getting better.

1534.

If certain crises function as the great correctors of collective and systematic stupidity, then the worst (like flood to fertile soil) is tied to the best.

1535.

Party politics as portrayed by both mainstream and social media is an ongoing blame game that cannot be taken seriously as representing the human condition without leading to the conclusion that its essential nature is moral degeneracy.

1536.

Astronomically, cosmologically, or eschatologically speaking, all human life is living on a razor.

1537.

When discussing a matter, two friends should be able to disagree without being disagreeable. However, if an unpleasant moment occurs, they should be able to overcome it without too much difficulty. Now let us imagine these two friends to be truth seekers of the highest order. Could it be that any disagreement between them, no matter how upsetting, doesn't finally serve as but one more path towards their common objective?

1538.

Morality becomes immorality for the simple reason that, in its fight to assert itself, it's willing to pick up any weapon at hand.

1539.

The great optical illusion is seeing the present as a defining moment more important than all others for the fate of humanity.

1540.

Lying is lord of the short-term, truth the long.

1541.

In the area of politics, morality, and religion, being lied to doesn't bother an enormous number of people until it brings bad consequences if not outright disaster.

1542.

It's possible to integrate almost seamlessly popular nonsense with the tried-and-true for at least a short period of time.

1543.

With respect to the truth, everything new, be it product or event, is a bit of a bad deal insofar as, with its potential to be put on the market and sold, it doesn't come without at least some false advertising.

1544.

What gives religion its incredible power, whether it be Christianity, communism, or climate change, is some long-term plan or project, utopian in nature and widespread or universal in scope, which allows people to be divided into those who are good for being for it and those who are bad for not.

1545.

What danger is there in thinking too deeply about life if it's essentially endless miracle and endless mystery?

1546.

If all thought about war and what it entails for humanity are put aside, it cannot be denied that our essentially social character, including the little-recognized friendly and gracious treatment of strangers, is what has kept the race going for thousands if not tens of thousands of years.

1547.

Is it possible to buy into some royal falsehood and yet be scrupulously honest in one's day-to-day affairs? Of course, since every large-scale certainty is this falsehood.

1548.

Perhaps one important reason most people get married is their inability to have life-long conversations with themselves which, in point of fact, some people are capable of and even enjoy more than most other conversations. This state of affairs, taken as a corollary to the first, may help to explain their not getting married.

1549.

Growing old gracefully, cynically viewed, is simply decaying less quickly than most.

1550.

An old face, generally speaking, is whatever has gone by and is largely out of sight, however great it may have been. A young face is the promise of the future, however illusory.