

Maxims, Existential Journal

by [Pedro Blas González](#) (September 2023)



An Allegory of Melancholy, Lucas Cranach, 1528

There is in us a tendency to locate the shaping forces of our existence outside ourselves. –Eric Hoffer

Like waves coming onshore, history undulates.

The impact of historical events, fashionable sweeping aside of life-affirming, civilization-building values—much like waves in their infancy, in the middle of a large body of water—cannot be understood unless we pay attention to the ideas that are responsible for what we objectively record as history.

Needless to say, not all ideas are equal. Some ideas are little more than the disorganized and contradictory whim of their progenitors. This is regrettable—deadly, indeed—for today, many who deem themselves people of ideas cannot hide the destructive whirlwind that marks their dysfunctional lives. Can anyone in this predicament really have constructive ideas to offer society at large? Can we spot the tragic lack of prudence in all of this?

Requiem for an Insincere Age

1. Postmodern nihilism.

Who among us today knows how to decipher the timeless truth and wisdom contained in maxims?

2. Passage of time.

Sitting under a palm tree, the world slips by unnoticed.

Through the gaps in the fronds, the infinite blue sky beckons the imagination to contemplate, "If only we could hold an infant's hand through the pangs of infinity." I stare at the sky and wonder.

3. Life is infinite.

Time travel seems redundant, for what more time do we need than the infinite life we are allotted.

4. Passage of time.

At dawn, we pinch ourselves and marvel at being alive; at dusk, we wonder if it is all real.

5. Passage of time.

Constrained by time, we swim out with the current only to be delivered back to our point of departure, the infinite shore.

6. Thought and the order of time.

To write is to amuse and delight ourselves with the order of time, before the clock ticks 0.

7. Lessons from history.

It is a major miracle that anything of importance is ever recalled.

8. Life and ageing.

Grasp, man, grasp! For when your hands become feeble, then, there are only regrets.

9. On character.

People-watching is frivolous and always greatly amusing. It is certainly more fruitful than to study them.

10. Postmodern nihilism.

Moral experimentation, scientism, the scien-ti-fi-cation of life, and sporting fornication. This is the extent of genius today.

11. Radical ideology.

What will future generations do with the dust and rubble that tyrannical ideologues leave them?

12. On tyranny.

The twentieth century was the century of tyrants and pacifists par excellence. In most instances, it is next to impossible to tell them apart.

13. Philosophy.

Regardless of how many have tried to prostitute her into becoming an academic business, philosophy is still a grande dame.

14. Postmodern nihilism.

Welcome to the age of post-intelligibility. And ... how proud we are of it.

15. On character.

It has been a marked opinion of mine, formed in my twenties, that the true measure of a person's good will is witnessed in their ability to compliment—in public.

16. Nihilism.

Ironically, in the end, it is nihilism that alerts us to the fullness and sanctity of the permanent things, the joy and beauty of Being.

17. On character.

True genius pays homage to constancy as a way of life.

18. Cynicism.

Cynics cannot help but to look for the 'underside' of genuine goodness and virtue.

19. Cynicism and affectation.

I have never met a cynic that saw himself as such.

20. Postmodern nihilism.

Postmodernism: the quest to self-destruct as a matter of pride: "I came, I saw, and destroyed everything in my path."

21. The permanent things.

We ought to treat questions as if the answer matters—for all time.

22. The permanent things.

To mock objective reality is like trying to breathe underwater, while bitching that we are drowning.

23. Killing time.

It used to be the case that people who played games did so out of a fullness for life.

24. Bigotry.

It is odd that in this age, when the word racism has gathered such bandwagon appeal, such feel-good, politically-correct steam, few should pay attention to its more paralyzing and lethal cousin: bigotry.

25. Affectation.

Personal idiosyncrasies cannot exist in a time ruled by affectation.

26. Morality.

Even moralists are busy experimenting today; performative, Kabuki theater style.

27. The annihilation of standards.

The question remains: will future generations be competent enough to mold the dust that we have created from our former standards?

28. Postmodern writers and thinkers.

It is curious how often and readily postmodern writers and thinkers talk about 'thought experiments.'

29. Postmodern writers and thinkers.

A timely oxymoron: 'postmodern' thinker.

30. Postmodern nihilism.

Postmodern nihilism might be best explained by Canetti's notion: "Ever since we know of years by the millions, it's all over with time."

31. A time of confused opinions.

In an age of noise and rampant opinions, silence and solitude frighten and make us anxious.

32. Self-reflection.

Introspection is the antidote to the disease that is postmodernity.

33. Cultural dark age.

When asked by an 'educated person' –by today's standards–why I own so many books, only then do I understand the corrosive nature of naturmensch.

34. Hollow critics.

It has been said that critics are people who produce nothing, die, and are quickly forgotten. A greater question should be: what resentment motivates their ire, cynicism, and envy?

35. Objective reality.

People who bark at the moon and temporal exigencies refuse to accept reality as it is, as it has always been—as it must be.

36. Passage of time.

Ever-fading, time flees from us faster the more we abandon ourselves to idiotic, worldly nothingness. Is that the point of postmodern life?

37. Truth and collectivization.

There is no truth in crowds!

38. Maladjusted people.

Self-loathing and narcissism are the twin pillars of postmodernism's social-political edifice.

39. Home life.

To open the door of one's home to people is a sacred act; make sure that those who enter your home come in good will, and are protectors of your honor, not wolves in sheep's clothing.

40. Children and innocence.

In order for children to be considered the future of the world, their innocence must be cherished and remain sacred.

41. Cultural dark age.

In an age of Lilliputians, moral and intellectual mendacity rules with a leather whip.

42. Postmodern Bolshevism.

Political correctness: another crafty and barbarous way in which the administrative state stumps on the will of the people in an open society.

43. Postmodern Bolshevism.

History shows that Soviet Bolshevism was years ahead of the elitist, censorial Western tyrants of today. Bolshevism coined an ingenious word for their dictatorial double-dealing and affectation: doublespeak.

44. Postmodern Bolshevism.

Orwell, Koestler, Muggeridge, Camus, where are you?

45. Truth and meaning.

Maxims fill the void of meaning that the chattering class creates.

46. Writers and thinkers.

Genuine thinkers sacrifice their well-being—awards, reputation, all that fashionable manure—for the sake of the shelf life that the future safeguards for truth.

47. Truth and the permanent things.

Quid est Veritas is a sardonic and comic elixir for postmodern revelers of chic. Poor souls... they don't know that truth is always verified and vindicated with the passage of time.

48. Cultural dark age.

Today we scrutinize the ingredients but cannot savor the meal.

49. Postmodern nihilism.

Communists, socialists, and fascists are the same dancers dressed up for a postmodern masquerade.

50. Beliefs and science.

Up: the levity and joy of living; down: the pull of gravity. Who today is willing to bet their life on either of these?

51. Wisdom and life.

Inspired by Pascal, corroborated by metaphysical reality, and seasoned by prudence. What a life!

52. Ignorance and affectation.

Hemingway was right when he suggested that too much of an 'open mind' makes our brain fall out.

53. Postmodern debauchery.

Defenders of postmodernity: people who revel in the sensual possibilities of nihilism. They are like a blind man who steals because he imagines that no one can see him.

54. Ignorance and pseudo knowledge.

A practical rebuttal to the nihilism of positivistic psychology: debunk the agents of disinformation with their own relativism.

55. Wisdom and reading between the lines.

Good listeners revel in fewer words; the closer to silence, the better.

56. Cultural dark age.

Narcissism and the pagan altar to the here-and-now are king and queen in an insipid, barren cultural landscape.

57. Wisdom and moral aberration.

Long gone are the days when people understood that pride always comes before the fall.

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Pedro Blas González is Professor of Philosophy in Florida. He earned his doctoral degree in Philosophy at DePaul University in 1995. Dr. González has published extensively on leading Spanish philosophers, such as Ortega y Gasset and Unamuno. His books have included [*Unamuno: A Lyrical Essay*](#), [*Ortega's 'Revolt of the Masses' and the Triumph of the New Man*](#), [*Fragments: Essays in Subjectivity, Individuality and Autonomy*](#) and [*Human Existence as Radical Reality: Ortega's Philosophy of Subjectivity*](#). He also published a translation and introduction of José Ortega y Gasset's last work to appear in English, "Medio siglo de Filosofía" (1951) in [*Philosophy Today*](#) Vol. 42 Issue 2 (Summer 1998). His most recent book is [*Philosophical Perspective on Cinema*](#).

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