

Aphorisms

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1. To analyze is deceitful above all things.
2. Critics did not arise in reaction to artists; artists arose in reaction to critics. (*Contra Nietzsche.*)
3. Eliot, in attempting to characterize the wit of the Metaphysical Poets, invokes “this alliance of levity and seriousness (by which the seriousness is intensified).” The parenthesis saves the observation from banality (despite the fact that the parenthesis is poorly employed, semantically). The lack of recognition that the levity is also thereby intensified condemns it to dogmatism—and what is worse, a dull one.
4. “Art is in the eye of the beholder.” Perhaps. In any event, some beholders have eyes that are more aesthetically pleasing to behold than others.
5. The philosopher’s complaint today: always a bride, never a bridesmaid. (Nietzsche would not be proud.)
6. It is a stroke of great good fortune for philosophers that reason and contemplation have proved to be the foundation of goodness, virtue and happiness.
7. A Kantian: one who cannot help but think that everyone else would be better off if they were more like him.
8. To be a true Kantian, one’s obsession with one’s self must know no bounds.
9. All that matters is the goodness of *my* will—everything else can burn and go to hell; all is well and all is well and all will be well, for *good is my will*.
10. I value the goodness of my will and the consistency of my thinking more than other people’s pain, more than my child’s well being, more than the health of the world. . . ’Tis not against reason to prefer the goodness of my will to the destruction of the world. (Who knew that Kantians were secretly Humeans?)
11. A Kantian is a megalomaniac. He attributes ethical value to an act only in so far as he stands in a certain relation to it. He doesn’t give a shit about the relations in which others stand to it. ’Tis against reason, to prefer the weight of others’ interests to the scratching of my conscience. (Ah, Kantians are not Humeans after all.)
12. Intent does not matter when one has profoundly hurt another. Only a narcissist will stand in the face of monstrous suffering and say, “but I meant well”—as though it matters in the slightest.

13. A Kantian has excellent powers of insight but suffers failures of imagination. She knows who she is, and cannot imagine that others could (or should) be any other way.
14. I am enough of a hypocrite that the hypocrisy of others bothers me—and my own does not.
15. One's morals are often shown more clearly by what one has contempt for than what one values.
16. One *feels* shame. One *is* guilty of sin. One can be guilty of sin and not know it; one cannot feel shame and not know it. (Spinoza knew this: "Bad conscience is not remorse at what one has done, but regret that one is not the person one thought one was.")
17. Some people commit crimes because of who they are—they act, and the action, being theirs, is a crime.
18. You do it in the moment. Later, memory gives you a good reason why.
19. "That puts me in mind of a story..." — no, the story took 'that' and put it in your mind with the prescission required for it to serve as the Münchhausenish *Bildung* of the story itself.
20. Personality trait—a poor idea. It does not express what one has, but cries out for what one needs.
21. Most important things—perhaps most especially love and hate—are not choices or feelings or states or capacities. They are activities.
22. One more willingly acts to gain the respect of those one hates than to show kindness to those one loves.
23. Is it easier to love or to hate? Much depends on what the "easiness" refers to: the capacity simply to experience the attitude, or the capacity to deal with the consequences of experiencing the attitude. Come to think of it, no—most people find hate easier, and more easily, on both counts.
24. Love and hate that one does not commit again and again to keeping in the world—*da capo*, as it were—embodied in one's activity and the web it forms in its interrelations with those of others, are neither, but have degenerated into formulaic rote.
25. Truth or tact? Is it so difficult to keep in mind that one can speak the truth gently? That, indeed, a gentle truth can be truer than a harsh one?
26. Honesty is almost always more valuable than truth.
27. I tried recently not to give a shit. Vanity stopped me. But I couldn't give enough of a shit to do anything about it.
28. Vanity has its place, its uses, its advantages—among other things, it conduces to shame.

29. To let 1 die to save 100 is tactics; to let 1000 die to save 1 is strategy. The specificity of the name exculpates the doer. (To let them all die is to let the fly out of the flybottle.)
30. It is accepted in America that to have more money entitles one to better healthcare. It is therefore right that to have more money entails being more likely to survive the same disease as someone with less. Does money have more than one kind of value, or does all value reduce to money?
31. When faced with two unreasonable extremes, find a third.
32. It is easy to feel there is something amoral or otherwise distasteful about consequentialism, for it disconnects moral value from an individual's practical reasoning process and whatever activity may eventuate—forgetting the possibility that something in the process *itself* may help constitute or conduce to moral value.
33. One can never try hard enough for the consequentialist. One can try, and try, and try, with all the earnestness in one's heart—but failure is *always* moral failure.
34. Get more than about 8 people together in a room to administer something of value and they temporarily lose all sense of decency.
35. There is no moral obligation to large groups of people organized for the relative economic, political, social or cultural benefit of a few.
36. Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you—is the height of presumption. Do unto others, as they would have you do—is parlous. Do unto others, as is appropriate to the moment, to the situation and circumstance, in light of the wider context—is most difficult.
37. Take what you want, and pay for it.
38. One ought to have empathy with one's past self, but, even more important, sympathy with one's future self.
39. Most people most of the time want more than anything that tomorrow be like today, no matter what they claim their opinion of today to be. And most of the time, they will do almost anything to avoid recognition of the dominance of that want.
40. 95% of how others act toward you has nothing to do with you.
41. On short and long time scales, people are simple. It's in between that some of us let our freak flags fly.
42. The ethical standing of an action often depends on the person who performs it. One person performs an action that is *prima facie* ethically problematic. We do not think she is wrong, or at least not very wrong; we do not blame her, or not very much; we forgive her; in particular, we do not think the action itself is problematically bad. Another person does the same, and

we blame him, castigate him, do not forgive, and think the action is indeed problematic. The difference? The way they inhabit and move through the world—with *joie de vivre*, with charitable grace, with cool elegance, with an innocent thoughtlessness, with condescension aforethought, with heavy malice—the person’s *style*.

43. Style is not always automatic—a way of planning, that one plans, can be part of one’s style.
44. It is important to see that it is *not* the person’s intentions that make the action ethically bad or good, wrong or right, nor the outcomes, nor the conformity of it to any rules broad in scope; those give only marginal evidence to use in judging the relation of the action’s character to the person’s character. It is also important to see that one’s judgment of these things often involves little ratiocination—depending on one’s style.
45. Law-based ethics: to obey the rules makes one a good person; virtue-based ethics: to be a good person makes one obey the rules. Really: one’s style determines what the rules are and what goodness is and how they stand in relation to each other.
46. Sometimes, depending on the circumstantiation, it is good to focus on the outcomes, the utilities, as the most ethically salient factor. Sometimes on the intent. Sometimes on the continuity with and integrity of one’s character. Sometimes on the goodness of one’s will. Sometimes on a rule to be followed. Sometimes on history and context. Sometimes on fairness and balance. Sometimes on some confabulation of more than one. Sometimes on something else entirely. The point is that, in a circumstantiation of import, it is rarely easy, and almost always takes thought and consideration, to figure out what it is good to take as salient, before one can even then begin to figure out how one should react, what one should think and say and believe and intend and want and do. And sometimes, worst of all, only by trying out, experimenting, with different ways of thinking and saying and believing and intending and wanting and doing can one begin to figure out what it is good to take as salient—and often damage must be done, to oneself, to others, to the neighborly, the parochial, the social, the political, the ethical, the romantic, the philial context, before one finds or constructs—before one can find or construct—what it is good to take as salient. If one ever can.
47. Consider the northern Ugandan 12-year old who is forced to watch his entire village slaughtered, his mother having her limbs chopped off with a machete; he is forced to rape her; he is sodomized many times over and forced to bear arms for the Lord’s Resistance Army, to maim, rape, kill and sodomize in turn. The idea that there is no moral conflict, that there is always a correct thing to do, devalues the horror of that child’s experience. The Kantian idea (*e.g.*) that one must be able to universalize the act, at least in principle, demands that, no matter what the child does or does not do, it be morally evaluable. But that child is beyond the moral sphere. No matter what he does, or does not do, it would be heinous to judge his action by any moral code. Nothing the child can do, or not do, is right or wrong in the face of that. According to Kantian moral theory, however, any being that cannot be held morally

accountable can be treated as a means to an end. There is, for the Kantian, no wrong done in how the Lord's Army treats and uses that child. Thus that child would be, for a Kantian, a Jew, in Eichmann's eyes.

48. Who decides the descriptive content of the proposition to serve as a maxim to be universalized, for the Kantian? (*Pace* those philosophers who fetishize words and sentences: the articulated linguistic form of the proposition cannot suffice.) Take Anscombe's man at the well.

"You are poisoning the well."

"No, I am pumping this handle. I know that this thereby pumps poison into the well.

I have, however, no intention to do so. I rather intend only to pump the handle—for any of a number of other ethically important reasons. (Never because I simply desire it!)"

There is always a structure of entailment and association, impelling and obliging in place that may militate in favor of one way or another—but what is the ethical relevance of that structure?

49. The ethical standing of an action often... is not a well defined idea at all, not, at least, with regard to the action *per se*. In order to evaluate with decency what is going on, one must try to see how the action fits into a larger pattern. And, oh, how many larger patterns there are to try, how many kinds of patterns, once one makes the effort to look around...
50. The Kantian ideal that there is no moral conflict, that there is always a right thing to do—is evil.
51. It is beyond astonishing that, by dint of social institutions, humans have been able to continuously track the number of years and days between the present and some distant moment in the past (somewhere between, say, 2000 and 4000 BCE)—the end-to-end of somewhere between 200 and 300 human lives—down to the correlation of happenings between distant places. There is no other achievement by the species to equal it.
52. There is no necessary conflict between the ideas of moral realism and moral pluralism: there can be "moral facts" indexed by social and individual context, and so different "moral systems" that are objective in an appropriate sense in different societies and cultures and historical epochs, and even for different individuals in the same society, culture and epoch.
53. If one can be a realist about moral facts, one can equally well be a realist about the kinds of cultural and social facts needed for an appropriate indexing. We rarely do epistemology the service, however, of metaphysical modesty, nor even metaphysical economy much less metaphysical reasonability. For a realist to work out what kinds of fact one needs is difficult. To work out what individual facts in a given case are relevant, and how, well... fuck it, let's go get a beer.

54. Kantian ethics is the ethics of the lazy, the ethics of those who would rather others do the hard work for them—they would appropriate “the right universal principles” that others have done the hard work of articulation and justification for. All they need do is endorse it.
55. There are no “absolute principles”; principles always are sensitive to context. Ethics is not for the lazy. You have to think for yourself, try to figure things out, in order to come to appreciate what is good and what is not. That process of figuring things out is what can lend ethics the relevant kind—the *only* relevant kind—of objectivity it admits. Bernard Williams, for all his faults, knew this. And, oh my god, his charisma, his *style*...
56. Hemingway, *Green Hills of Africa*:
- A thousand years makes economics silly and a work of art endures forever, but it is very difficult to do and now it is not fashionable. People do not want to do it anymore because they will be out of fashion and the lice who crawl on literature will not praise them. Also it is very hard to do.
- Substitute ‘ethics’ for ‘economics’, ‘a good action’ for ‘a work of art’ and ‘onlookers’ for ‘the lice who crawl on literature’, and one will have something to think about.
57. *Bonum est multiplex*; it is not arbitrary.
58. We present ourselves to ourselves as we would have others perceive us; we present ourselves to others as we would really be.
59. The greater part of a good conversation occurs on the brute physical level—the way the conversants hold themselves, the rhythm and tempo of changing bodily attitude and the set of facial expression, the dance of the hands, the look in the eye, the correlation among all these with changes in tone and timbre of the voice—I never feel as though I know anyone until I’ve met him or her in the flesh. I’m with Oscar Wilde on this one: “It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances.” You just have to know how to take “appearances”.
60. Many of the most admired and influential, most honored, most prized members of society are those—actors and actresses—who strenuously work to present themselves as other than they are. We revere them and suffer their influence because, by their doing so, we often feel that we know them better than we do those around us.
61. Rembrandt’s self-portraits: he gazes clearly and intently outwards, the better to contemplate his own inner life. (He is, after all, always looking at himself.)
62. Many believe only the negative they hear about themselves, many only the positive; few have the courage—the patience?—to listen to both.
63. It is easier to forgive a friend for being wrong about oneself than for being right.
64. *Free will*: the feeling that you’re bettering yourself. *Determinism*: the fact that you’re not.

65. “Everything happens for a reason!” Well, if it does, it is often a *really bad* reason—what good reason could there be for all the horror and suffering in the world?—so I reckon I prefer to believe no reason than that.
66. There was nothing I didn’t expect, except for everything that actually happened.
67. The mind is the body’s cruelty to itself.
68. “You will never disappoint me.” You think so poorly of me? (You see no possibility in me?)
69. “If you love something, chain it down. If it stays, it’s yours. If it leaves, it never was.” Yes, that too.
70. If there could be a god, it would be just big enough an asshole actually to exist; therefore, there is a god. (The Argument from Assholes.)
71. A metaphysician: one who says “it *must* be so”—and thinks he means something by it.
72. Another metaphysician: one who says “it *cannot* be so”—and does not doubt her doubt.
73. The Principle of Sufficient Reason: “When something happens to catch my eye, I will by god find something to say about it that will suffice to glut my interest in it.”
74. One can come to metaphysics by any of a number of virtuous routes: cowardice, avarice, sloth, arrogance, lust, envy, gluttony. (Why Christians are metaphysicians.)
75. A metaphysician: one who will argue (and believe) that the claim “nothing is something” is meaningful and true, but “something is nothing” is not.
76. “I can think of no other way it can be; therefore, it must be that way.” A metaphysical argument.
77. Do not envy a metaphysician his certainty—he suffers for it.
78. One reason why philosophers may be fixated on the idea that, not only does stuff in the world admit of clean separation and division into neat and orderly categories, admit of pristine classification, but, even more, that there is a natural, canonical, preferred way of doing so (an unrepentant and degenerate Aristotelian essentialism doing the devil’s work among our cognitive enterprises): children need that sort of cleanliness, precision and narrowness of vision to begin to make sense of the world, to develop their own mental constructs conforming to the concepts of their socio-linguistic community and to learn to rely on and deploy them in communication. And philosophers, in their fearful childishness, have never learned to let go of the security blanket.
79. Bad ideas are the only path we have to good ones.

80. Progress in philosophy—which can and does happen—consists at one time of a widening and deepening of the space of conceptual possibilities, and at another of a pruning and winnowing of it—in short, any fruitful modification to its content and structure.
81. To realize that what we had taken as a necessary idea or relation among ideas in thought is not necessary after all, and so need not reflect anything that holds of necessity in the world. To give up old “necessities” of thought and so open our mind to new conceptual possibilities. To free ourselves to look in new directions, to ask new questions and new forms of question. That is the expression of a philosophical spirit.
82. I will show you the bridge can be built by walking across it.
83. “This thing did that; this is a thing of that kind; all things of that kind do that; that is why this thing did that.” “This is its own peculiar thing; it did that, in its idiosyncrasy; that is why this thing did that.” We count the former as an explanation, the latter not—which is to say, we have low standards for that kind of thing.
84. We are surprised when the world—in its structure, in its relations, in its motion—its state and its evolution—does not mirror our words. As though our words came first.
85. The mind rebels—but the world is apolitical.
86. The politics of the mind lie beneath the world’s notice.
87. Perhaps the most serious error one can make in philosophy is to start with a word, and look for *The Right Meaning*, *The Right Concept*. It is always more fruitful to have an idea of what one is after, and look to see what things or phenomena conform to it in a relevant way. It is most likely one will find several things and phenomena to be of interest, to relate in illuminating ways, to one’s initial idea. With those in hand, one can begin to investigate what significance and importance, if any, the conformances have, what they have relevantly in common, if anything, how they relevantly differ, what are their worldly properties, their practical prerequisites and consequences, their epistemic and methodological tributaries and distributaries, and so on. The urge to nominate one of them as *The Right One* serves no useful purpose. It can, at most, scratch the itch of an unregenerate Aristotelian essentialism; but one ought to treat the root of such an illness, not the symptom.
88. Both philosophy and science are æsthetic endeavors, albeit ones with empirical and conceptual constraints. Like all æsthetic endeavors, their practitioners employ and are driven by many different styles.
89. One scientist displays mastery in the domination of the physical world, whether that be in experiment, in observation, in articulation of theory, or in the bondage of physical system to obey the strictures of articulated theory. (Aristotle, Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Euler, Lagrange, Lavoisier, Helmholtz, Boltzmann, Kelvin, Freud, Curie, Rutherford, Feynman)

90. Another scientist submits wholly to the physical world to achieve culmination, ravished by the world, willingly and unwillingly, always both at once. (Kepler, Huygens, Newton, Thomas Young, Darwin, Maxwell, Hertz—this is not a modern attitude)
91. A third scientist stands back and says, “this is,” because of the world and independent of the world, always both at once. (Plato, Archimedes, Ptolemy, Newton, Carnot, Riemann, Maxwell, Lorentz, Planck, Einstein, Bohr, Heisenberg, Schrödinger, Fermi, Geroch)
92. A fourth transcends the world, never having even been aware of its existence (Hamilton, Poincaré, Eddington, Pauli, Dirac, Penrose—this was not an ancient attitude); these also struggled with the physical, although they never understood that is what they were doing.
93. “It is not the intensity but the duration of high thought that makes high men.” – Nietzsche. Yes, but...: it is not the duration but the intensity of high thought that makes men high.
94. The less we try to find meaning in a thing, the more deeply we may understand it. (The world is a thing.)
95. Quine was wrong. Math and logic are put-up jobs; science is not. The world slaps science down like the upstart it is when it doesn’t behave. The world couldn’t give a piss against the wall about math and logic. (Insight into Quine’s psychology.)
96. Mathematics is a language humans have developed to speak beautiful nonsense. Mathematicians revel in the beauty. Scientists grapple with the nonsense.
97. Math is not a picture of the world. But sometimes it’s pretty to think so.
98. Most conclusions don’t last. The observations that spur one to them, they are everything.
99. Theory plays Boswell to the subtle and tragic clown of experiment’s Johnson.
100. Science is conflict. Philosophy is engagement. One leads to knowledge, the other to understanding. Both are good. Both are needed.
101. In science, to oversimplify well is the goal. Thus, the many more scientific *Wunderkinder* than the philosophical.
102. There is a fifth kind of scientist, the one who finds the world to be home. These are most rare. (Darwin, Maxwell, William James, Fermi, Goodall, E. O. Wilson)
103. One of the only two philosophical theses I believe without qualification or hesitancy is from Plato: a true lover of wisdom, a philosopher, must have an erotic attachment to thought, and that not to the activity only. *Erīs* can indeed lead to knowledge, but only *Erōs* to understanding. And so it is of a piece with the other philosophical thesis I hold to without doubt, also from Plato, that all true philosophy happens in conversation.
104. Philosophy is a belief and a hope, sophism a belief and a desire.

105. Kierkegaard said the self is a sign in the act of signifying itself. I don't know what he meant. Now, if he had rather said the self is a sign in the act of signifying itself in the world—*then* I would have understood him.
106. "How could we go so far as to insert language between pain and its expression?" How, indeed. And how could we fall so short as to think that the expression of our thought in activity has no language—no mediation by the practice of epistemic creativity and regulation—inserted between itself and the world? In this case, at least, the world is our pain in only a metaphorical sense. (Against Tarskian semantics.)
107. A stream flowing over a ridge of rocks is the root of metaphor. One cannot make a metaphor for it. ("Fanny och Alexander")
108. It's kind of like the truth... it's a proposition.
109. Truth is the best high, the most addictive drug.
110. Even the philosophers least sympathetic to metaphysics, who feel themselves least kin to the progeny of Leibniz, hold still to the shibboleth that deduction is a privileged form of reasoning, analytically connected to truth—and that a shibboleth in most of the senses of the term. Deduction is only one more style of reasoning, against which the potential fruitfulness of a chain of thought may be evaluated. And what can one mean by 'potential' here? Well, one must first choose a style of reasoning to evaluate such modal claims...
111. Realism is not a proposition whose truth-value can be affirmed. It is a way of thinking, an attitude, a style of moving forward in one's cognitive work, shaping and informing but not contributing to the content of one's thought. It is a leap of the absurd into faith, but at the same time a sober reflection that is only one step in the ongoing dialectical dance of one's cognitive capacities in their attempt to explore the world, itself to be given over to instrumentalism—also a leap of the absurd—as the times demand. And that will give over in its turn back to realism, in the Bacchanalic comedy of thought, which, from time to time, settles down into the stately progression of the tragedy of understanding, and back again and again—to eventuate in the pragmatic attitude.
112. Realism is the vigor of life spending itself with all extravagance, giving itself away in every sense of the word, instrumentalism the necessary decomposition that will in turn render the soil of the mind fertile and nourish new life. Only anti-realism is inanimacy. Rocks cannot nourish life, and a coffin of iron will not allow the decaying dead to give itself back as nutrient for and substance of new and different living forms.
113. One is a realist, and one regrets it; one is an instrumentalist, and one regrets it; one is a pragmatist and learns to take joy in passing from one regret to the other.

114. A formal semantics can never suffice to render exhaustive and determinate sense to a set of symbols as actually used for and in ordinary human communication. A formal semantics can handle ambiguity only by looking to syntactical context (if it is not to cheat by inviting pragmatics in through the back door by “intensions” and other such chicanery). If it is to allow the same symbol different senses at different times, it can do so systematically only by looking to the variety of syntactic relations the symbol may bear to other symbols. Sometimes, however, the same syntactic response, say, to a query will have different meanings depending on whether or not the respondent is being sarcastic. This sort of thing can warp the sense even of syncategorematics such as ‘and’—“And Caesar was an honest man.”
115. Sarcasm, indeed, can infect every term of a language. It is the great diagonalizer of semantics: no matter how one tries to construct a formal semantics that allows for multiple senses for the same symbol in virtue of sarcasm—that attributes a set of senses to the symbol, some of which are sarcastic—one can always be sarcastic about that set itself, using the symbol in a way by construction not contained in the attributed set.
116. Practical truth differs from “ordinary” or “theoretical” truth at least in this way: a practical truth can always be rendered false, negated, by an intentional action or sometimes a volitional act; some theoretical truths require changes in the external world independent of one’s intention for their negation.
117. To say “I promise” adds nothing cognitive to the claim, as “is true” to the proposition, except only the possibility of disappointment.
118. The Truth of the philosopher—semantic truth, metaphysical truth, logical truth, conceptual truth, physical truth—is better denominated ‘theoretical truth’, for there is always a theory of the world with respect to which one’s propositions are true or not.
119. Let the metaphysical heathens cry, “But we want our gods Truth and Falsity!” Their *Sehnsucht* does not render to the cry cognitive content.
120. There is more than one kind of knowledge, and more than one fruitful way of trying to understand, to get a grip on, the world. (Against epistemic chauvinists of all kinds, including those of science.)
121. Sometimes a felicitous falsehood is more illuminating than a drab truth.
122. Love is the triumph of optimism over a frank assessment of human nature—and, as such, a testament to it.
123. Every true friendship has an erotic component—not necessarily sexual, although there may be that as well, but a spiritual coupling.
124. Sex is yet one more form of communication forming the complex web of human activity that grounds all meaning, and there are as many forms of sex, each with its own inner spirit and outer nature, as there are ways of standing in relation to other humans.

125. One important way of viewing sex: a conversation held with all parts of the body explicitly and volitionally involved with an immediacy commonly thought to be reserved for those organs more commonly associated with communication—and like any good conversation, sometimes one on one is best, but other times polyphony is to be preferred, and yet others one wants to commune with oneself.
126. One form of genius: the utter particular that, by virtue of its particularity, transcends its circumstantiation to become universal—the expression of the universal in the most finely grained particular. One could write a book on that. A very particular book. (Hegel tried.)
127. The finest, deepest comedy arises from sympathy, tragedy from empathy.
128. Cause and effect cannot make comedy. Accident cannot make comedy. Comedy is the conjugal union of cause-and-effect and accident. And tragedy? The subsequent and simultaneous cuckolding of each by the other. (Which, let's be honest, is comic...)
129. Our sense of humor shows who we are more than our sense of tragedy.
130. "Life is nasty, brutish and short." Is there a greater sarcasm in philosophy? To be sure, it is nasty and brutish, whether in the State of Nature or no. Why not then celebrate the brevity?
131. Plato: "The affairs of human beings are not worthy of great seriousness; and yet we must take them seriously." An argument against suicide.
132. Baudelaire: "Time consumes existence pain with pain." Also an argument against suicide.
133. Aeschylus (by way of RFK): "Even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair and against our will, comes wisdom, through the awful grace of god." An argument against suicide as well.
134. "I quote others only the better to express myself." – Montaigne
135. "*P*, I think." The basis of our rationality is the deepest—and most common—expression of our uncertainty. (At least in English!)
136. Apprehensive, conceited, judgmental, self-conscious, ...—these are bad things? (At least in English!) And thoughtlessness and selflessness? The world is a scary place for us.
137. We are all paranoiacs to some degree, holding in our cold, huddled thoughts the idea that the world is against us—for objections come through objects. (The Germans wind this oppositional stance up to a sublime pitch, for *Gegenwart* manifests itself in *Gegenstände*.)
138. To think humans are nothing special compared to other animals is to exhibit how special they are.

139. Carnap was a Platonist in this way: an erotic lover of thought. And that in the purest sense, for he loved only thought—its cognitive content. He wrote drily to tame the intensity of the proposition.
140. “That is cheap and easy” (said to dismiss a philosophical position). Expensive and floridly Baroque is better?
141. Philosophy is the continual battle against the prejudice that one knows what one is talking about.
142. Sometimes to do nothing all day, and to do it well, is to accomplish something important.
143. There are experiments in art, and they can fail in many ways, but one of those ways is not by failing to uncover something about the world.
144. An individual work of art may fail by not showing something about the world, depending on the intent of the artist, the norms of the milieu in which the artist works, and so on, but that does not mean the work, as an experiment, failed for that reason. An experiment in art tries to show or change something about art.
145. One way to study musical pieces, to classify them by their internal structure: are they monologues or dialogues? Or something more subtle—a monologue, say, that has a second voice calling and responding to the first only internally, as in Pink Floyd’s “Wish Were You Were Here”, as opposed to the simple monologue of “Pigs on the Wing I”, or a monologue with a second voice calling but ignored, as in the first movement of Scriabin’s Piano Sonata No. 1. This has nothing to do with how many voices or instruments are sounding simultaneously. The Softies’ “The Beginning of the End” is one thought whose subtleties and complexities are played out in two voices and two guitars, whose continual contraposition only deepens the unity of the thought. “Potato Head Blues” by Louis Armstrong and His Hot Fives is the manifestation of many minds uniting through the sympathetic intercollation of many thoughts expressed in many voices (even though one or two may be dominant in certain ways). Andrés Segovia playing Albéniz’s “Granada” from “Suite Española #1” is the manifestation of many thoughts and voices in sympathetic and antithetic relation voiced by a single instrument. It is not two minds in one body. It is a multitude of minds and bodies contained in and expressed from a single instrument.
146. Hendrix says: I make this. Homer says: this is. Why do I strongly feel one is more profound?
147. One artist displays mastery in the domination of the physical world, whether that be paint and canvas, sound waves, the linguistic articulation of mental states, or in the bondage of mental states to obey the strictures of articulated symbolic systems. (Homer of *Odyssey*, The Ecclesiast, Sappho, Sophocles, the sculptor of “Winged Victory” in the Louvre, Caravaggio, Shakespeare, Kant, Beethoven, Byron, Frege, Ezra Pound, Proust, Louis Armstrong of “Tight

Like This”, Barbara Stanwyck, Bud Powell, Julia Child, Lee Friedlander, Fellini, The Beatles of “A Hard Day’s Night”, Hendrix, Radiohead of “Kid A”, Plato of *Republic*.)

148. Another artist submits wholly to the physical world to achieve culmination, ravished by the world, willingly and unwillingly, always both at once. (Homer of *Iliad*, The Ecclesiast, Euripides, Jesus, Tintoretto, Blake, Schubert, Keats, Chopin, Kierkegaard, Eadward Muybridge, Rodin, Anna Akhmatova, Louis Armstrong of “What Did I Do to Be So Black and Blue”, Chaplin, Faulkner, Coleman Hawkins, Veronica Lake, Humphrey Bogart, Ralph Eugene Meatyard, James Dean, Kurosawa, The Beatles of “Let It Be”, The Velvet Underground, Radiohead of “OK Computer”, Plato of *Symposium*.)
149. A third stands back and says, “this is,” because of the world and independent of the world, always both at once. (Homer of *Iliad*, The Ecclesiast, Aeschylus, Piero della Francesca, Rembrandt, Robert Herrick, Bach, Jane Austen, Mark Twain, Nietzsche, Charles Sanders Peirce, A. A. Milne, Rudolf Carnap, Louis Armstrong of “Potato Head Blues”, Alexander Calder, Hemingway, Marino Marini, Wallace Stevens, The Marx Brothers, Gary Cooper, Katherine Hepburn, Yasujiro Ozu, Thelonius Monk, Garry Winogrand, Marcello Mastroianni, Bob Dylan, The Beatles of “Abbey Road”, Andrei Tarkovsky, Thomas Pynchon, Plato of *Laws*.)
150. A fourth transcends the world, never having even been aware of its existence (Homer of *Odyssey*, The Ecclesiast, Fra Angelico, Jan van Eyck, Mozart, Laurence Sterne, Shelley, Swinburne, Odilon Redon, Rilke, Bertrand Russell, Louis Armstrong of “Basin Street Blues”, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Audrey Hepburn, John Coltrane, Robert Adams, Jacques Tati, Francoise Hardy, The Beatles of “Magical Mystery Tour”, The Flaming Lips, Plato of *Phaedo*); these also struggled with the physical, although they never understood that is what they were doing.
151. There is no fifth kind of artist, for no artist finds home in the world. Some rare few, however, do find paths that have affinity for one another and draw them into convergence, making the whole world feel like home for a while, with an expansiveness to it, a warmth and goodness that go beyond safety and comfort. (Mendelssohn, Oscar Wilde, A. A. Milne, Calder, Matisse of the Cut-Outs, The Miles Davis Quintet of “Workin’”, Paulette Goddard, Cary Grant, Jimmy Stewart)
152. It is good to have heroes. It is better to overcome them.
153. It is good to have gyros. It is better to eat them.