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THE FIRST QUARTER OF MY CENTURY

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MARGOLIN

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Аннотация

The First Quarter of My Century is a collection of one hundred essays documenting the intellectual and existential experience of the first twenty-five years of the author's life. The essays offer a sustained reflection on time, personal identity, responsibility, the power of circumstances, and the limits of human choice. They combine analysis, observation, and an attempt to critically examine personal experience as material for philosophical judgment.

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Introduction

This book emerged from a simple yet inevitable desire: to record my own experience of thinking at the moment I turn twenty-five. A quarter of a century is neither a milestone that demands final conclusions nor an age that presupposes definitive judgments. It is merely a point at which it becomes important to understand what has shaped my perspective, which ideas have sustained me, and what conclusions I have drawn from encounters with people, from circumstances, and from my own inner work.

I do not seek to present my thoughts as final, closed, or claiming universal validity. On the contrary, I am fully aware that some of the positions expressed here may change over time. Certain themes may lose their significance; others, by contrast, may acquire new meanings. This is natural: life moves forward, intellectual work continues, and consciousness develops precisely through the ability to revise one's own foundations.

For this reason, this book is neither a monument to a set of views nor an attempt to secure an authoritative position. It is a fixation of a single moment in life. It is a document of who I am now, at twenty-five, with the volume of experience I have lived through and with the questions to which I have arrived.

The one hundred essays collected here are not a random assortment of reflections. They are the result of a prolonged process of inner selection. In each of these texts, I sought to understand specific forms of human experience: loss, maturation, the fallibility of forecasts, the nature of conflicts, self-deception, generational change, the workings of consciousness, the structure of judgment, motives of behavior, choice, responsibility, conscience, loneliness, the need to belong, and the attempt to understand oneself and others. This is a wide range of themes, but they are united by one thing: they are my personal attempts to comprehend the structure of human life through the prism of real situations, concrete circumstances, and clear philosophical logic.

I do not offer ready-made answers. I offer a practice of thinking. This practice can be accepted, challenged, or continued independently. But it is always directed toward one aim: a sober understanding of reality and an honest conversation with oneself.

What is this book for the reader?

The answer is simple. Each of us passes through similar questions. Age, biography, and circumstances create differences, but the structure of inner work is largely the same for everyone.

We try to understand who we are, why we make certain decisions, what shapes us, what destroys us, what helps us, what distorts us, where the source of strength lies, where weakness resides, and what remains when everything external disappears.

This book may be useful to those who are searching for a language for self-analysis. To those who encounter similar experiences and do not know how to think about them. To those for whom clear, consistent arguments matter more than emotional reactions. To those who want to see how one consciousness – neither better nor worse than others – attempts to impose order on what appears to be a chaos of thoughts.

Each essay is not an answer, but a tool. Each text is an invitation to think. It is an attempt to show the path I myself have taken and to pass on the points of support that I have managed to discover.

I do not claim that my position is true. But I am certain that it has been honestly lived. And if it helps someone see their own path more clearly, then the work has not been done in vain.

This book is my way of leaving a trace not in the space of convictions, but in the space of reflection. My way of fixing who I am today, in order later to be able to compare how differently I may think at thirty, forty, or fifty.

This is not a completed project. It is the beginning of a long conversation – with time, with myself, and with everyone who opens these pages.

Welcome to my one hundred thoughts. Welcome to a space where I try to be honest with myself and with the reader.

The Price of Instant Alertness

An essay on the quiet war that contemporary culture of instant pleasure wages against its own consumer. On how the market for energy drinks and stimulants cultivates dependence on the illusion of alertness, disguising societal fatigue behind bright cans and sweet chewing gum. The price of this instant alertness is health, awareness, and self-control.

In an era when advertising promises awakening in three seconds and alertness is sold in an aluminum can, it becomes necessary to ask what this instant energy actually costs. Store shelves are filled with caffeinated chewing gum, taurine-infused ice cream, and energy candies containing additives few can name. What is most striking is not that the market for such products has grown severalfold, but that its target audience has become noticeably younger. Packaging stylized as comics and memes gleams enticingly on display shelves, teenagers film TikTok challenges counting consumed energy drinks, and global brands increasingly launch product lines aimed at children and adolescents.

What drives this market? Why has the culture of instant effect become an integral part of the contemporary world? And what consequences follow from an alertness whose price will be paid

far longer than its effect lasts?

We live in an age of fatigue. Fatigue has become chronic, permanent, nearly unavoidable. A society driven by the idea of productivity no longer recognizes the right to rest. A rested person is a suspicious person – either unemployed or lacking initiative. One of the unspoken commandments of our time reads: if you are not tired, you are not working enough. This fatigue is imposed less by objective workload than by the rhythm of culture itself, where the flow of information never stops and where being late means ceasing to exist.

When the body's natural resources fail to keep pace with this rhythm, products of instant effect come to the rescue. Yet alertness poured into cans and molded into bars is not real energy. It is mobilization – working on credit, a debt that must later be repaid. While classic energy drinks once raised concern because of their contents and possible consequences, the new wave of energy products – ice cream, chewing gum, candy – is perceived as harmless entertainment. Meanwhile, a generation is forming for whom alertness without cause is the norm and rest is a weakness.

The market of instant solutions is not accidental. It arose from the need to compensate for the impossible. The human body is evolutionarily unprepared for modern burdens – informational,

emotional, physiological. Rather than changing the rhythm of life and social and labor systems, humanity chose another path: to create the illusion of adaptation. Energy drinks and other stimulants function as social prosthetics, simulating performance. And the further this market develops, the more sophisticated it becomes. If ten years ago energy drinks were associated with adults – extreme athletes, long-haul drivers, students during exam periods, night workers – today their formats and advertising are actively tailored to adolescents and even children.

Manufacturers target younger audiences deliberately. Habit formation at an early age is a reliable way to secure a future consumer. Children and teenagers are more susceptible to marketing triggers, more responsive to packaging, design, and social media advertising. Energy chewing gum shaped like comic-style bombs, ice cream with a «boost effect,» candies «for drive» – all of this is not merely product, but strategy. It instills a belief: alertness can be bought. Energy comes not from within, but from a box. There is no need to care about sleep, nutrition, or routine – taking a «pill» is enough. Once the habit is formed, the adult becomes an ideal consumer of stronger stimulants, from energy drinks to antidepressants.

The illusion of alertness these products provide is their most dangerous feature. Physiologically, most energy products

do not add energy so much as temporarily redistribute the body's resources. Caffeine blocks adenosine receptors in the brain responsible for the sensation of fatigue; taurine and glucuronolactone increase excitation; sugar produces a brief spike in blood glucose. But the effect is deceptive. This is not an increase in strength, but a temporary mobilization of internal reserves. When the effect wears off, fatigue deepens. The body is depleted, the nervous system thins, and the need for stimulation grows. The paradox is clear: the more alertness one buys, the greater the subsequent exhaustion.

Why is the culture of instant effect so appealing? Because it aligns with the dominant social imperative of our time: results matter more than process. We are accustomed to getting everything quickly – fast food, fast dating, fast money, fast likes. Deferred gratification has lost its value. Few are willing to wait, invest, or plan. This culture has become embedded in both consumer behavior and social ethics. Energy products are merely one of its most visible manifestations.

Social pressure demands constant alertness. Fatigue is treated as personal failure. If you are not energized, you are ineffective. This belief is subtly reinforced by corporate culture, influencers, advertising, and even popular psychology. The alert person is successful; the tired one has lost. In this race for artificial vitality, energy products become not just commodities, but social

instruments. This is also biopolitics: power exercised through control of physiology. It is easier to govern exhausted yet stimulated people than free and rested ones.

A particularly alarming aspect is the focus on younger audiences. New-generation energy products are no longer just drinks. They are ice cream, gummies, chewing gum, lozenges. Their packaging mimics comics, video games, TikTok memes. Their advertising targets teenage communities. The consumer is shaped from childhood – a person who does not know that alertness is a state, not a product; who becomes accustomed to seeking resources externally rather than internally.

The consequences of this culture are immense. Physiological consequences range from cardiovascular problems to anxiety disorders and insomnia. Psychological consequences include dependence on stimulation, panic attacks, and disrupted sleep. Social consequences involve the formation of a society of perpetual consumers, incapable of sustained, patient effort without external stimulation – people who live from dose to dose, from spike to spike.

Most troubling is how this culture redefines health itself. Health is no longer about inner balance, sleep, nutrition, or physical activity. It is about drive, «charge,» and the ability to work beyond one's limits. Energy products have become

symbols of this new model of health. Whoever is alert is healthy. That this alertness is purchased through stimulants is of little concern.

The price of instant alertness is high. It is not only the health of individuals, but the future of an entire generation – a generation that does not know how to rest, does not recognize natural fatigue, and fears slowing down; a generation taught from childhood that its energy is a commodity and its alertness a service. If energy products were to disappear one day, this society would experience withdrawal, unable to function without external stimulation.

Can anything be changed? Possibly. But doing so would require dismantling the core belief of our time: «everything, immediately.» Restoring the value of delayed results. Learning to acknowledge fatigue. Abandoning the glorification of overwork. Recognizing that the human being is not a perpetual-motion machine. And understanding that genuine alertness is not purchased – it emerges from proper rest, physical movement, intellectual effort, from life itself, not from a can.

When the culture of instant effect ceases to be the norm, energy chewing gum and caffeinated ice cream will disappear as well. Because the social demand for perpetual alertness will

vanish. As long as that demand exists, the market for instant alertness will thrive – selling people not energy, but its phantom.

The Society of Fragmented Tasks

A critical reflection on contemporary approaches to time management, with particular attention to the popular Pomodoro method. A symptom of a deeper cultural transformation in which the fragmentation of time replaces natural rhythms of work, substituting freedom with the illusion of efficiency. An essay on the exhaustion of attention, the loss of the capacity for deep concentration, and the transformation of time into a controllable resource.

There is something darkly ironic in the fact that the human being of the twenty-first century – a creature that has proclaimed its liberation from the shackles of history, religion, and ideology – voluntarily binds itself to a timer. A small digital tomato blinking on a laptop screen determines when one is allowed to work and when one may take a breath. The Pomodoro method, conceived at the end of the last century as a tool to combat procrastination, has today become a symbol of a new culture of time: fragmented, discontinuous, and, in essence, profoundly anti-human.

Before the age of machines and factories, work was an organic continuation of life. People hunted, plowed, wove, healed, wrote books – without measuring effort in minutes. Working time was

governed by the rhythms of nature, the body, and necessity. Even the medieval craftsman experienced work as a sequence of meditative, continuous processes. The Industrial Revolution was the first to sever human beings from the organic experience of time. From that moment on, the day was divided into shifts, hours, breaks, quotas.

At first, this appeared efficient. But the effect proved deceptive: along with productivity came anxiety. The world split into «work» and «life after work.» Time became a commodity.

The digital age has only intensified this condition. We live in a constant stream of notifications, urgent emails, messages, and tasks. Our attention is scattered. Fear of missing out (FOMO) and the habit of instant response have destroyed the ability to concentrate on a single task for more than a few minutes.

The paradox is striking: the more technologies we create to save time, the less of it we seem to have. We jump from task to task, from notification to notification, like someone who has broken free from chains that he himself forges anew. The Pomodoro method is not a cure for this fever, but a symptom of the disease. Twenty-five minutes of work followed by five minutes of rest appear to be a solution. In reality, this is a crutch for an exhausted, fragmented consciousness. People seek control

over time because they have lost it. The timer on the screen replaces personal will. It is no longer you who decides when to work, but a digital signal.

Employers, marketers, and social media algorithms are all interested in our fragmentation. A person incapable of deep immersion is easy to manage. He remains in a state of constant mild busyness, yet never truly engages. This is the ideal consumer and employee. He does not demand conditions for long-term projects. He can be loaded with small tasks, his efficiency measured by the number of Pomodoro intervals per day, bonuses distributed according to the timer.

Pomodoro sells the illusion of freedom – as if you were the master of your time simply because you can measure and organize it. In reality, this is yet another form of external control. A person relinquishes the right to natural fatigue, to sudden inspiration, to monotony, to days when work simply does not happen. Everything is subordinated to the stopwatch.

We lose the capacity for prolonged immersion. Deep work becomes an anomaly. Culture fills with increasingly superficial projects: texts written in three Pomodoros, designs completed in five, decisions made in two. The fatigue produced by fragmented labor is subtle. It does not resemble the tiredness that follows physical work. It is a slow, viscous exhaustion

that accumulates over months. We lose wholeness – the ability to work for long stretches with full immersion, the ability to lose track of time while writing, programming, building.

Life turns into a sequence of twenty-five-minute segments. Work becomes a simulation of productivity. Time becomes a commodity.

How can we reclaim time?

The first step is to acknowledge that Pomodoro is not a universal good, that the fragmentation of time is a symptom of a culture of anxiety rather than an instrument of freedom.

The second is to reclaim at least fragments of deep work: to work for hours without a timer, to lose the sense of time, to engage in tasks that do not fit into twenty-five minutes.

In our attempt to control time, we have lost it entirely. The Pomodoro method is a digital overseer that promises freedom but sells dependence. The culture of fragmented tasks is not progress; it is a symptom of a society that has forgotten how to work naturally.

Either we learn to master time again, or we will become its slaves completely.

Emotional Dictatorship

In this essay, I decided to examine one seemingly insignificant detail of our digital lives: instant reactions on Telegram. I have always believed that any opinion has the right to exist until it is drowned in either the approval or the hatred of the majority. And it is precisely here that the most interesting thing begins: a person is capable of changing their attitude toward a thought without ever reflecting on it, simply by seeing a sufficient number of hearts or angry emojis beside it.

I conducted an experiment to test how easily we are governed by those we never see – a crowd without faces, without voices, but with a rapid click. This essay is about a new form of emotional dictatorship that requires neither violence nor commands. It lives in likes. And the most troubling part is that we submit to it voluntarily.

There is in human nature an eternal desire to be part of the crowd, and an equally persistent desire to resist it. In the age of digital media, however, this struggle has taken on new contours. There is no longer a public square where one can shout an opinion. There is no living face to confront. There is only a screen and the signs you see before you encounter the thought itself. This is why ideas today have ceased to be self-sufficient. They exist only within the context of immediate reaction. A like, a flame, a heart – or, conversely, anger, displeasure, a «dislike.» These miniature markers have become a new form of power,

a new metaphysics of digital existence.

I conducted a small experiment that revealed a simple truth: we do not so much read messages as we adjust ourselves to the reactions of others. In this everyday digital procedure, one can discern that very absurd society I might have described in another era. Only now the absurdity has been stripped of romance, and the crowd has anonymously clicked «like.»

I selected thirty participants, aged between eighteen and thirty-five. Exactly half were men and half women. They appeared to be ordinary Telegram users. Yet this heterogeneity proved essential.

Ages 18—25 represented a generation of instant emotion – those who live in the mode of «now.» Their reactions form within the first seconds, and their consciousness quickly aligns itself with the mood of the majority.

Ages 26—35 were individuals who present themselves as knowing the price of emotions. Yet it was precisely they who most often experienced inner irritation when the crowd disagreed with their position.

I presented both groups with a series of posts – some neutral, others provocative. In each case, I preassigned emotional

reactions: in one version positive, in another negative.

My assumption was that positive reactions could soften even a critically inclined reader, while negative ones would provoke in dissenters a level of aggression extending beyond the digital space. This is how the simplest and most imperceptible form of consciousness management begins.

The topics of the posts were straightforward: the morality of contemporary trends, the right to solitude, the value of power and success. The same ideas were accompanied either by a surge of positive reactions or by a wave of negative ones.

After publication, the focus group was asked to provide feedback. I recorded not only the content of their responses, but also their emotional intensity.

Positive reactions:

78% of participants softened their initially negative attitude toward the idea. Even those who disagreed found «reasonable elements» in it.

Younger participants were more willing to change their opinions, especially those who had not initially engaged in deep reflection.

Negative reactions:

65% of opponents experienced strong irritation – not because of the idea itself, but because of the sensation of «the crowd against me.»

20% withdrew from the discussion entirely.

15% initiated aggressive disputes – not with the author of the idea, but with those who supported it.

Women more often chose silence and withdrawal. Men more often entered open confrontation. The absurdity lay in the fact that the content of the post no longer mattered to anyone. All discussion revolved around the reactions.

This experiment confirmed what is rarely acknowledged in the era of digital romanticism: the human being remains a herd creature. Only now herd behavior is expressed not through a unified shout, but through a unified click. And it is precisely here that a new form of power emerges. It requires neither cruelty nor threats. It is enough to place the right emojis to alter the perception of an idea.

Telegram reactions constitute a simplified model of collective consciousness. It does not demand thought from the individual. It demands agreement.

Can one live in a society where opinion depends on how many likes appear in the first minute after publication? Of course one

can – because we already do. And in this new digital reality, freedom is reduced to a choice between a heart and an angry emoji, while truth has ceased to be what is, becoming instead what is supported by the majority.

The Society of Public Selves

The world is no longer tolerant of the silent. It was once possible to remain quiet about oneself, to live without a digital trace. Today, the absence of public presence is almost a cause for suspicion. I have noticed that even in professional, business, or friendly interactions, a person with their own Telegram channel or a visible social media presence immediately inspires greater trust – not because they are more competent or more virtuous, but because they are legible. Their thoughts become a storefront; their posts, a new form of résumé.

We live in an era in which silence is no longer neutral. Silence provokes suspicion. Anonymity is treated as a sign of social deficiency. The absence of a digital footprint borders on a minor crime. And the further this process advances, the more convinced I become: the future belongs to those who speak – or at least to those who create the appearance of speaking. In the twentieth century, a person could conceal their thoughts. One could be a postman, a carpenter, or a minister without anyone having the right to know what was going on in one's head. Existence did not need to be proven through words. It was enough to work, eat, raise children, and die.

Today, everything is different.

A person's value is now measured by their public thought. You may be unemployed, nobody, absolutely nobody – but if you have a Telegram channel where you broadcast your doubts, hopes, memes, and literary references to the world every day, people will begin to listen to you. To respect you. Perhaps even to fear you. Because in a society where thought is on display, the one who remains silent appears as a potential threat.

I increasingly notice a strange shift: when meeting someone new, people no longer look first for a job title, but for a channel. For a public biography. A world in which a handshake once sufficed now demands a ritual of digital verification. The act of publication has become proof of existence. You exist because you have subscribers. You are trustworthy because your thoughts can be reviewed. You are alive because someone reacts to your words.

Public visibility has become the primary currency. Without it, you are anonymous. And therefore suspicious.

Telegram has ceased to be merely a messenger. It has turned into a private state of meanings. Here, a person rewrites themselves. They say not what they are required to say, but what they wish to leave behind. You may be a modest accountant, yet run a channel analyzing the war in Sudan. You may work

in a warehouse, yet publish philosophical essays on the meaning of life. And in this strange new world, real life recedes into the background.

You are your channel.

I know people whom no one has ever seen in person, yet whose thoughts are quoted everywhere. I have seen anonymous channels turn nobodies into voices of the streets. I have seen the deletion of a channel strip a person of their social identity.

Digital thought has become capital. It is exchanged for attention, trust, and status. We live in an economy where a person's value is determined by the number of reactions. In an era in which a thought that gathers no likes is considered dead.

You can no longer simply think. You must package your thought so that it fits the format of a post. Of a short video. Of a tweet understandable to the majority.

And if you cannot – then you do not exist.

The most alarming part is that this has ceased to be a right and has become an obligation. If you remain silent, you are uninteresting. If you do not share, you are socially dead. If you do not maintain your own channel, then you have nothing to say –

and therefore no reason for others to be near you.

People begin to fear their own invisibility. You cease to be noticed if you are not broadcasting. You are forgotten if your thoughts are not fixed by reactions. A world in which everyone must daily reaffirm their right to exist with a post.

Even death is no longer a reason for silence. I know dozens of channels whose authors have long since died, yet whose thoughts continue to be published.

The future has already begun. A world in which you are obliged to speak. To speak is no longer merely to communicate. It is to prove that you belong. That you are not a threat. That your thoughts align with the moral code of the current hour. And those who remain silent are outsiders.

Soon, any employer, any date, any politician, any neighbor in your apartment building will ask first: where is your channel? Where are your thoughts? How do you live?

And you will not be able to avoid the answer.

We have created a culture in which thought has ceased to be private. It has become a commodity. You sell your thinking in the same way you once sold your labor time.

And the most dangerous part is that we wanted this ourselves. We learned to love being visible. We enjoy checking the number of reactions, forwards, comments. We like knowing that someone agrees, someone argues, someone envies. Because that is how we feel real.

There is something absurd in this. And frightening.

We have all turned into small dictators, demanding that others constantly think aloud. In this new world, one cannot remain silent. And one cannot avoid displaying how one lives. Because if you are silent, you are out of the game.

You are nobody.

And therefore, you are dangerous.

Between Universes and Effort

This essay is an attempt to explain, for myself, the connection between action and result through the idea of parallel universes. I reflect on the notion that any effort made here and now initiates a wave of alternative scenarios, in which different outcomes are possible, yet all of them represent a continuation of a single choice: to begin. If one lies still and does nothing, then in other versions of oneself the maximum change is merely turning over to the other side. But if, in this reality, one moves, acts, tries – then somewhere else one is already obtaining a first result. And perhaps it is precisely that result which, at some point, influences the primary trajectory as well. This is not science in the strict sense, but neither is it fantasy. Rather, it is my attempt to logically substantiate a belief that movement always works.

Can the existence of parallel universes be admitted? Theoretical physics does not rule out such a possibility. The multiverse hypothesis – derived from interpretations of quantum mechanics (in particular, the so-called many-worlds interpretation proposed by Everett) – suggests that every quantum choice may give rise to a new reality. In one, you turn your head to the right; in another, to the left. In a third, you do not wake up at all. But if this assumption is taken seriously, a question arises: does a bridge exist between these realities, and can it be constructed through effort?

I often reflect on what happens in other branches of reality when I make a choice in this one. If I wake up at six in the morning and write, read, move my project forward, what happens in the parallel versions of myself? Perhaps one of them does the same, but a bit faster. Another moves more slowly, but with an unexpected idea. A third takes a risk that I avoid here. The totality of these variants forms a kind of probability wave within which my own trajectory takes shape.

There exists the concept of quantum superposition: prior to measurement, a particle can exist in multiple states simultaneously. Our choice as observers «collapses» the superposition into a single reality. If this idea is extended to the human level, it follows that each of our actions is an act of choice that collapses the world. Action, therefore, is not merely behavior, but an intervention in the fabric of probabilities.

When we remain inactive – lying down, procrastinating, refusing to move – we allow reality to collapse into its least productive branch. In one parallel version, we simply lie on the other side. In another, we pick up a phone. The multiplicity of such realities creates a quasi-stable zone in which nothing significant occurs. But if, in the base universe, I begin to act – systematically, rhythmically, deliberately – I activate branches with a wide range of outcomes: successful and unexpected,

radical and quiet, yet meaningful. This is not metaphysics; it is probabilistic mechanics.

I assume that action generates a chain of alternatives in which each choice resonates with other versions of myself. The more I do, the more parallel versions of myself I activate. And if some form of informational interaction between realities exists – for example, through unconscious patterns, intuition, or synchronicity (as cautiously suggested, for instance, by David Bohm in his idea of the implicate order) – then I may be able to «sense» the influence of another self. The one who decided. The one who succeeded.

This is, of course, a hypothesis. But within contemporary scientific thinking, it is permissible to construct models that do not claim absolute verification if they are heuristically productive. And this model is as follows: the more active you are in this reality, the more probabilities are activated in others. You become a network of versions of yourself. And this network is not merely a background, but a structure of support. It returns energy to you in the form of coincidences, intuitive decisions, small «lucky accidents» which, in fact, are probabilistic responses to your own efforts in other versions.

Thus, belief emerges. Not as an irrational attitude, but as a logical consequence of action. I act – and therefore I believe.

I move – and therefore I sense that others are moving as well. And if this is the nature of the universe, then the only way to «establish contact» with all versions of oneself is to act. Inaction is self-isolation within a closed cell. Effort is an act of expansion across time and space.

And so I continue. I write, think, work. Not because I know it will succeed. But because I know that if I do not do it, no one else will – neither here, nor in another universe.

A Soft Form of Decay

I wrote this essay as a personal attempt to capture how the betting industry – formally restricted yet effectively ubiquitous – has become part of the cultural norm. This is not a text about morality, but a reflection on how destructive phenomena enter society not through scandal, but through rhythm and repetition. Betting no longer looks dangerous – and that is precisely where its danger lies. I draw parallels with historical examples in which the normalization of harm began with the phrase «there's nothing wrong with it.» I conclude with a sense of unease: if we do not see how it works, it means it is already working.

Sometimes culture decays not to the sound of gunfire, but to a jingle: «claim your free bet.» This is not an exaggeration. I increasingly notice that betting advertisements no longer provoke even irritation. They are embedded – in games, in sports, in media, in language, in visual design. They do not break resistance; they bypass it. They penetrate softly, delicately, daily. Betting has become the visual and linguistic background of everyday life. We fail to notice the moment when it stops being something separate and becomes part of the norm.

I grew up in a country where casinos were associated with something marginal: semi-darkness, crime, foreignness,

suspicious money. There were laws, there was a moral consensus – and, ultimately, there was aversion. A decade passes, and the same industry returns, but now through a mobile application, in polished packaging, with the faces of popular bloggers and the typography of major sports leagues. Betting is now «part of the show,» «gaming,» a «segment of the entertainment economy.» It is everywhere. And formally – outside the law. But in essence – already within the law of habit.

This creates a strange duality. On the one hand: fine print, age limits, «play responsibly,» «we oppose addiction.» On the other: YouTube integrations, sponsor logos on players' jerseys, branded caps awarded to the man of the match. Even in spaces associated with school age, I hear: «I wouldn't bet on that.» This is no longer an exception – it is the language of the environment. And language, as we know, shapes thinking.

Of course, someone will say: «No one is forcing anyone.» Formally – yes. But reality does not operate through commands; it operates through conventions. If from the age of fourteen you live in a media environment where betting exists somewhere between excitement, sport, and a financial instrument, you grow up with the sense that it is permissible. Normal. Acceptable. Then a simple formula begins to work: if it is everywhere, it must be safe. If it is safe, then it can be tried.

We barely notice how a new mode of thinking establishes itself in the public consciousness: «take a risk – maybe you'll get lucky.» This is no longer just a bet; it is a life orientation. Fast money, a short path, virtual confidence. And at its core lies the illusion of control. You choose the event yourself, build the accumulator yourself, and if you lose, it is your own fault. Total freedom. And total responsibility – before numbers that govern you.

I am not a moralist. I do not write this in the name of morality. I write in the name of intuition. It tells me that when a society becomes mass-conditioned to a behavioral model in which winning matters more than working, that society weakens. Not immediately. Not loudly. Not in the form of catastrophe. But as a soft, muted shift of priorities. Gradually, the idea of effort disappears. It becomes laughable. Boring. Inefficient. Someone builds – someone bets. Someone creates – someone guesses. And guessing wins.

History has seen this before. In nineteenth-century China, opium began as fashion, then became routine, then turned into catastrophe. In twentieth-century America, the cigarette was an attribute of masculinity, then an attribute of oncology. In late Rome, described by Suetonius and Tacitus, mass games were first a compromise with the populace, then a substitute for civic responsibility, and finally a symptom of decline.

We live in a digital society with analog instincts. We can still be drawn into something simple, bright, and instantaneous. But now – not by shouting, but by a promo code. Not by threat, but by gamification. The primitive trigger is repackaged – and that is enough. And this is the core problem. Because destructive forces that do not provoke rejection are far more dangerous than shock. They become habit. And habit is a form of education.

I do not think we are sliding into an abyss. But I know that the normalization of betting is not a cultural triviality. It is a sign. A turn. A marker of a shift in which play displaces labor, chance replaces meaning, and superficial confidence becomes an alternative to effort. And if we do not notice how this happens, it means it has already happened.

And while we smile at the phrase «claim your free bet,» we are not losing money. We are losing resistance.

Legality ≠ Legitimacy

This is a reflection on the distinction between what is formally permitted and what is internally perceived as just. I attempt to understand why some laws elicit consent while others command mere compliance, and what happens to society when form separates from meaning, and procedure ceases to resonate as truth.

At times, we notice that between what is allowed and what is just, there lies not an obvious, but an increasingly perceptible boundary. Formally, the rule is observed, the article applied, the procedure executed. Yet internally, a sense remains: not everything is right. It is as if the law has been pronounced – but has not convinced. It has not resonated.

This distinction – between legality and legitimacy – has long existed. Plato, in *The Republic*, already distinguished between justice as an idea and justice as an institution. Law is a technical instrument. It can be adopted, codified, enforced – and still fail to elicit internal consent. Legality corresponds to form. Legitimacy corresponds to expectation, meaning, trust.

Hannah Arendt wrote that power rests not on force, but on recognition. A law can exist without legitimacy – but it quickly becomes not a support, but merely an external regulation.

Procedure without substance. And then a social discomfort arises: everything may appear «by the book,» yet the experience feels alien, dry, mechanical.

History offers numerous examples where what was formally permitted provoked internal protest. There were eras when society sensed that not everything codified was worthy. Conversely, there were acts that were prohibited but commanded respect because they were grounded in moral intuition, in a sense of justice.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau described the social contract not merely as an agreement to obey, but as an agreement to participate. We observe the law when we feel it is our own. When it protects us rather than simply regulates. When it embodies the logic of the common good, rather than merely the mechanics of enforcement. The moment this perception fades, cautious detachment begins. People live by rules without trust. They comply without consent. And this is a gap that, over time, becomes noticeable.

Today, this distinction is particularly important. The world has grown more complex, procedures have become more transparent, yet the perception of justice remains internal, human. If society senses that a given norm is formally permissible but arouses doubt, this is not a cause for escalation,

but a reason for discussion. For seeking a form of law that can again be perceived as just.

This is why we increasingly return to the question: what makes a law persuasive? Not merely binding – but respected. Not every «permissible» action becomes right. Not every «forbidden» action is experienced as justified. Between form and meaning, there must always be space for critical reflection – not for conflict, but for deliberation. For aligning law with conscience, norm with trust.

When the law speaks with the voice of meaning, it functions not through fear, but through consent. And in this lies its true power.

Numerologism

This essay is devoted to the phenomenon of numerologism – a cultural transformation in which quantitative indicators acquire the status of the highest legitimation of meaning. Numbers no longer serve as a measure of reality; they replace it. Reach, ratings, views, and metrics displace content, intonation, and substance. I offer a philosophical reflection on how the logic of algorithms and managed numbers shapes a new type of thinking – disciplined, comparative, self-adjusting – and how, in this process, space for non-quantifiable experience disappears.

In a world where every gesture can be recorded, every click counted, and every emotion reduced to a reaction, the number is no longer an instrument. It is an authority. We have entered the age of numerologism, a new cultural formation in which quantitative thinking assumes not a subsidiary but a governing function. What once measured now commands. What once helped navigate now determines what exists and what does not. Visibility becomes a condition of being.

Numerologism is not merely faith in numbers. It is the inability to think outside of numerical frameworks. It is the erosion of content within form, where reality is counted but not lived. What matters is no longer the text, but its views.

Not the act, but its reach. Not the speech, but its conversion. We believe we control numbers. In reality, they control our behavior. We write a post not when we have a thought, but when «the algorithm sees activity.» We choose a headline not for meaning, but for clickability. We think of ourselves in terms of statistics: subscriptions, steps, calories, efficiency, reach, focus time, scores, coefficients. Mechanics replace meaning, and productivity replaces conviction.

Foucault formulated power as follows: power is not what presses upon us, but what structures the field of possibility. In this sense, the number is power. It does not forbid, punish, or control directly. It constructs the desired, it guides: this is better, this is more successful, this is more visible. The number does not argue. It declares: «Here is the proof.» You see: fewer likes, fewer views, less engagement – therefore, you erred. And you do not try to understand, you try to align. To adjust. To conform. The number does not require meaning. It requires repeatability. And here lies the distinction between numerologism and any other form of rationality. This is not simply numbers as accounting; this is numbers as a totalitarian language.

Baudrillard wrote that reality disappears not under censorship, but under the excess of its simulacra. We no longer seek truth; we seek the number that substitutes for it. Authenticity now exists only when verified. If you speak – and it does not spread – then

it has no weight. An opinion without likes is not a thought, but an error. Beauty without views is not beauty, but invisibility. Even pain, if not formatted as a viral story, loses legitimacy. A thought not confirmed by numbers is perceived as devoid of value. A new form of knowledge emerges: what has received a metric.

A numerologist is not necessarily materialistic. They can be deeply spiritual, ethical, subtle. But they will count. They will check. They will fear being outside the field of visibility. Because outside visibility is out of the game. And out of the game is out. Numerologism is voluntary discipline. We ourselves ask numbers to measure us. We wear trackers, set goals, generate reports. We rejoice when the numbers rise and lose confidence when they fall. We do not notice how we abandon spontaneity because it cannot be forecasted. We do not follow intuition because it is not representable on a chart. We do not trust our sensations – but we trust weekly screen-time statistics.

This is the point at which power ceases to be external. It becomes part of operational consciousness. The power of numbers is not in frightening us. It is in being understandable. Convincing. Rational. We no longer need coercion. We discipline ourselves.

It cannot simply be labeled «bad.» It cannot simply be labeled a tragedy. Like any historical mutation, numerologism does not

demand moral judgment. It demands understanding. Numbers are a powerful tool. They can measure pain, track epidemics, optimize logistics, reduce corruption, predict disasters. But when numbers become a way of thinking about everything, they cease to be a tool. They become a framework. And a framework, once accepted as natural, ceases to be noticed.

What do we lose? We lose the sphere of life that cannot be measured. Doubt, trust, internal intonation, inspiration, love, silence, the invisible tension of thought, intellectual risk, moral ambiguity. Everything that resists quantitative verification disappears as a factor, is displaced as noise, ridiculed as «unsubstantiated.» We begin to fear not mistakes – but the unmeasurable. To fear being incomprehensible, unvalued, inefficient. To fear being outside evaluation, because that means being outside significance. And that is almost akin to disappearance.

It is in this fear – subtle, modern – that numerologism lives. It does not shout. It does not impose. It simply proposes counting. Then proposes comparing. Then proposes adjusting. And then it no longer proposes, but demands. And you do not even notice how you stop thinking outside the numbers. Because outside them – nothing exists.

The Wrong Word

This essay is an observation of how meanings are eroding in contemporary Russian speech. Words sound confident, yet fail to signify what they ought to. «Frustration,» «toxicity,» «abuse,» «infantilism» – terms ripped from their contexts have become markers of thoughtless speech. I diagnose a superficial use of language, a symptom of cultural haste and intellectual negligence, and I call for a return to precision in words – as a form of respect toward oneself and one's interlocutor.

Russian speech today is full of words that sound correct but convey almost nothing. We speak with them, write with them, and create an impression of thought through them. These words are not false – they are emptied. Like an old tea bag, still fragrant but no longer steeping. Words that have lost their tension. Or, more accurately, words that now live not as thought, but as ornamentation.

Meaning is not lost suddenly. It is lost gradually. At first, a word is misused for convenience. Then, by inertia. Then, by habit. And at some point, its original function disappears. The shell remains, the sound remains, the context remains – but what made the word significant vanishes: precision, weight, internal measure.

Take, for example, frustration. Today, this word is applied to almost anything: fatigue, laziness, apathy, bad mood. «I am in frustration,» people say, as if referring to a mild inner hangover. Yet in psychology, it has a precise meaning: an internal tension arising from the impossibility of achieving a goal. It is not caprice. It is not laziness. It is a breakdown at the boundary between desire and obstacle. And if this meaning erodes, the distinction between temporary lapse and deep trauma is erased as well.

Or tolerance. How often is it used ironically: «tolerasts,» «tolerance as decay»? Yet in its proper sense, it is not about capitulation. It is about restraint. About the ability to coexist with another without losing oneself. It is maturity, not weakness. Yet public discourse has shifted the emphasis, and now the word lives as an accusation.

Manipulation. Today, any influence qualifies. If you persuade, you manipulate. If you argue, you are exerting pressure. The absurd arises: a thought, if persuasive, is suspicious; an idea, if effective, is toxic; conversation, if efficient, is cause for alarm. Thought becomes violence. Silence – the only permissible form of civility.

Infantilism, another example, is applied to anything that

deviates from rigid norms. A person who feels – is infantile. A person who hesitates – is weak. Yet infantilism is not emotion; it is the refusal of responsibility. The refusal to be a cause rather than merely an effect. When the word becomes a label for any vulnerability, it ceases to discriminate and ceases to function.

Around these terms emerges a whole vocabulary of the new language: abuse, resourcefulness, trigger, toxicity, cognitive dissonance. They escape disciplinary context and settle into everyday life. Not because we have grown wiser, but because it has become convenient to speak complexly. This is language designed to appear competent. As if speaking a word is already understanding, as if a term is an argument.

But language does not forgive comfort. If we fail to maintain the boundary between meaning and decoration, language begins to collapse. Precision disappears. Distinctions are erased. Thought turns into noise, into social style. The paradox: we live in an era of words – and do not understand what we are saying.

A word that loses its connection to concept becomes ideology. It does not explain – it marks. It says: «I am from this camp,» or «I am not from that one.» Toxic – safe. Abuser – victim. Judgment – prohibited opinion. This binary is not about thought. It is about signaling. In such a language, one does not discuss – one determines.

Where does this come from? Primarily, from the loss of internal discipline in speech. We no longer feel the weight of a word. We choose it as an accessory, an impression, a shell. We confuse complex with compound, psychological with psychologizing, precise with terminologically dense. We enjoy sounding intelligent – and forget that to sound is not yet to mean.

And also – from acceleration. Speed kills nuance. Slow speech allows pauses, clarification, doubt. Fast speech offers only ready-made forms. On Telegram, TikTok, short videos, spontaneous reactions – what is needed is a signal, not a thought. So we take a word with a tag. It is already processed. Already provokes a reaction. Already in circulation. And thus – already imprecise.

What is to be done? Return. Not to the dictionary – but to effort. Speak not automatically, but with minimal caution. Do not fear clarification: «What do you mean?» Do not accept a label as a diagnosis. Do not trust words by sound – only in context. Teach yourself to think in language, not with language. Remember that clarity is not the enemy of subtlety. It is its condition.

A word is not a sound. It is a choice. We are not obliged to speak fashionably. We can speak precisely. Even if quieter. Even if slower. Even if more challenging to perceive.

Because meaning is also a form of respect.

Corruption as Climate

In this essay, I argue that corruption is not merely about money or bribes. It is about an environment in which the meaningless becomes normalized, inefficiency is protected, and redundancy is built into the system. Corruption is a climate in which the unnecessary persists, activity is simulated, and the connection between actions and their real value disappears. I examine how this logic infiltrates not only institutions but everyday life: language, work, thought, and the way we spend our time. For me, this is not journalism – it is an attempt to capture a form of decay that begins with internal consent to the meaningless.

Corruption is not always about money. And almost never only about money. Money is merely an obvious trace, a consequence, a visible marker of a far deeper process that rarely appears in reports. Corruption is not a transaction. It is a climate.

Its presence does not necessarily manifest in bills or briefcases. It may lack a concrete episode, a criminal act, a «hero.» It can be formalized, coordinated, sanctioned – and still be fully present. Because at the heart of corruption lies not theft, but the breakdown of connections between a thing and its purpose, between function and execution, between words and deeds.

In an uncorrupted system, a person holds a position because of competence. A project exists because it is needed. A structure functions because it produces results. In a system infected by corruption, everything is inverted: a person remains in position because they cannot be removed. A project exists because it has already started. A structure exists because someone is responsible for it.

This is the essence of institutional decay: the impossibility of stopping the unnecessary. Fear of halting. Desire to prolong, preserve, leave untouched. Careful indifference, where every inefficiency protects someone else's stability. Where emptiness becomes a status. Where simulation becomes a form of occupation.

Thus emerges an environment in which no action is strictly necessary. Everything exists «just in case.» It is created to exist, not to function. And within such an environment, people change. They do not become thieves – they become useless. Quietly. Carefully. With respect for the regulations. They know what to say, what to write in reports, what not to touch. They cease to seek real work.

This is the second stage – ethical corruption. When action loses its horizon, when the goal is not the result but the

continuation of the process. When efficiency is a threat because it undermines stable inefficiency. At this stage, anything that does not imitate provokes anxiety, suspicion, unease.

At this stage, corruption ceases to be a violation. It becomes the norm. The fabric of the environment. Reproduced, maintained, justified. A collective tactic of self-preservation emerges: «Better this than worse.» «At least everything is calm here.» «No one bothers anyone.» A project long devoid of meaning persists because its closure would trigger inconvenient questions. A person who contributes nothing remains – because any replacement would create friction. And everything stays as it is – but without internal legitimacy, without belief.

At this point begins the third level – time corruption. It is quieter, not scandalous, but deeper. Because it is no longer about money, but attention, life, human hours spent on the unnecessary. Participation in what is not needed. Presence where there is no reason to be. Consent to be part of the unnecessary. This is the heaviest form: when the individual has not stolen, falsified, or lobbied, but simply devotes themselves daily to nothing. Without resistance. Without questioning. Without asking, «Why is this?»

In this context, doomscrolling is not laziness. It is participation in the general corruption of time. Linger in a feed mirrors

a meaningless meeting. Procrastination is not personal weakness but a symptom of an environment where results are irrelevant, goals diffuse, and everything can continue indefinitely, simply for the sake of continuation. We learn to be busy – but not necessary.

This is the true scale of corruption. It is not that something was stolen, but that everything remains in place. The meaningless persists. The redundant is protected. The superfluous is untouchable. The necessary is accidental. No criminal statute can capture this condition. Because it exists not in acts, but in the air, in the structure of everyday life. In language, where «held a meeting» sounds like achievement. In reports, where the line «completed» closes any question. In a tone where initiative provokes concern and the initiator provokes suspicion.

What is to be done? Probably not destruction. That is a temptation: expose, fire, cancel. But corruption does not fear loud words. It fears the simple question of necessity. «Why this?» – the most subversive question in a bureaucratic environment. Because it requires not an answer, but justification. And justification is rarely stable in a system that relies on the status quo, on inertia, on collective consent not to see.

Fighting corruption means not chasing, but naming. Naming things as they are. Recognizing the useless as useless. Ceasing

participation in simulations. And, above all, restoring to the individual the internal right to meaning: to ask oneself and others the uncomfortable question, «Why this?»

As long as this question is asked, resistance is still possible. Quiet. Invisible. But real. Resistance – not to the system, but to meaninglessness. And therefore to the deepest form of corruption: the corruption of distinctions between what is necessary and what merely exists.

Freedom

In this text, I reflect on freedom not as a right or external possibility, but as an internal state requiring maturity. It was important for me to establish that freedom begins not where constraints disappear, but where a person is capable of acting without the need for external validation and without the impulse to justify themselves. I distinguish freedom from arbitrariness, from mere will, and from public gesture.

Freedom is not equivalent to the presence of rights. It does not arise from legal recognition, political conditions, or social guarantees. These parameters create external possibilities for action but do not determine its internal nature. Freedom is not a category of external space; it is a characteristic of a subject capable of autonomous decision-making and bearing responsibility for those decisions.

The notion of freedom is often substituted with the idea of arbitrariness. Yet arbitrariness requires no effort – it is a product of impulse, inertia, or inclination. Freedom presupposes the existence of choice, but choice alone does not render an action free. It becomes free only when the subject is aware of the consequences and accepts them as their own.

In this context, freedom is linked not to possibility, but to readiness. Readiness to act without external justification and without internal self-justification. It begins at the moment when a decision is made not in anticipation of approval or understanding, but as an expression of a position that requires no verification. A free act is not explained – it registers the measure of the subject's maturity.

Freedom requires discipline. Abandoning discipline in favor of self-expression is not liberation, but a form of dependence on the arbitrary. To be free is not to follow the first impulse, but to pause, distinguish, evaluate, and assume responsibility for the consequences. It is not an act of negation, but a form of consent to the necessity of being the cause of one's own action.

Immaturity does not reject freedom, but it cannot sustain it. It requires structure, external sanction, or a moral referent. In conditions of uncertainty, the immature subject tends either toward submission or withdrawal. Both options exclude freedom as action within the bounds of personal responsibility. Therefore, freedom is possible only where the subject can bear the consequences without delegating blame.

Freedom is not a collective state. A collective may provide conditions for choice, but it cannot guarantee the maturity of each participant. Freedom is indivisible. It exists within

each consciousness as the capacity for action independent of validation. In this sense, freedom is always individual, and therefore always entails risk.

Discussions of freedom often focus on power, politics, or economics. Yet in the philosophical sense, freedom is an anthropological category. It concerns the structure of the subject, not the structure of society. Changes in institutions do not generate freedom where the internal capacity to bear it is absent.

Thus, freedom is not a condition of possibility, but a form of maturity. Not a position, but a tension. Not a right, but a choice exercised in the absence of external protection. Not a gesture, but an action for which the subject assumes the consequences. Where this is possible, there is freedom. Where it is not, there is only reaction, submission, or flight.

Processed People

In this essay, I analyze the phenomenon of so-called «processedness» as it appears in language, behavior, and professional environments. My interest is not psychological but structural: how a behavioral model, presented as maturity, substitutes reflection with automatism, and participation with controlled distance. I aim to show why culturally «processed» people are often the least capable of action, and to distinguish genuine inner work from its verbal simulations.

The word «processed» has established itself in contemporary speech as an independent marker of human completeness. It emphasizes an allegedly traversed path – inner, emotional, psychic. It is used confidently, as a diagnosis or a certificate of maturity. Yet closer inspection reveals that behind this word lies less reflection than behavioral standardization. Processedness, in its mass usage, is not internal transformation, but a regular demonstration of manageability.

A typical «processed» person speaks evenly, looks calm, refrains from sharp reactions, and frames their detachment as a boundary. They employ standard formulas: «I do not take on others' problems,» «I am in contact with myself,» «It is important for me to preserve my resources,» «I do not go where

I am unsafe.» These formulas are socially validated, instill trust, and create an appearance of stability and responsibility. But in most cases, they do not signify maturity – they signify minimal engagement.

What externally appears as emotional equilibrium often masks an incapacity for tension. A person who calls themselves processed may not be mature, but simply well-trained in a behavioral model approved within psychotherapeutically oriented environments. This model requires no internal depth. It requires correct speech. And this is its problem.

Processedness, devoid of substance, becomes a new form of normativity. It leaves no room for impulse, risk, conflict, pain, or doubt. All complexity is immediately interpreted as immaturity. If you are irritated, you are «projecting.» If you argue, you have «triggered a pattern.» If you care, «that is your story.» Consequently, any form of living reaction becomes suspect. Anything outside protocol is reduced to «unprocessed.»

Thus arises a secondary language, unrelated to thinking. It does not investigate – it classifies. It does not engage with what is – it immediately labels. It is a language of psychological bureaucracy, where every emotional phenomenon is packaged into an explanation and loses its density.

In this environment, the «processed» emerge as socially convenient. Yet they are often the least capable of action. Not because they are weak, but because they refuse everything associated with internal tension, disruption, and uncertainty. Where quick decisions are required, where there is no emotional safety, where control cannot be maintained, the processed person falters. They withdraw, close off, distance themselves – and call it a boundary. They will not enter open conflict, even if it is necessary. They will not engage in a tense dialogue, preferring «not to get involved.» They cannot endure prolonged uncertainty – because any disturbance of stability represents a «threat to resources.» Within a team, they inspire trust – until action under risk, crisis, or instability is required. Then they disappear – physically or psychologically. Intellectual and moral self-exclusion takes place, framed as self-respect.

The processed person is not toxic. But they are sterile. Their behavior is predictable, not deep. Their speech is smooth, not precise. Their actions are safe, not decisive. They replace thinking with emotional correctness, effort with methodical execution, inner reflection with verbal automatism. They do not destroy, but they do not create. They are embedded. Balanced. Harmless. And that is their central problem.

Truly processed people are not those who avoid involvement, but those who can be present under tension and not evade it.

They are not those who have constructed boundaries, but those who know when to violate them. They are not those who have «worked through everything,» but those who can be in conflict with themselves – and continue to act. They are not protected. They are not stable. But they answer – not with words, but with deeds. Not to the system, but to their own conscience.

Genuine processedness is not a set of regulations. It is a way of being in a living, contradictory, unbalanced reality – without detachment, without façade, without schema. It is not about appearing even. It is about sustaining tension and resisting the simplification of oneself into the correct word.

Russia. Those Who Do Not Give Up

I am not interested in the external representation of Russia, but in what sustains it in reality: the people who continue to do their work – calmly, without pathos, without seeking recognition. I write about participation without rhetoric, about loyalty without naivety, and about that form of inner resolve on which everything truly rests.

The state can be described. Power can be evaluated. Symbolism can be reflected upon. But the country itself, as experience, as presence, as the field of everyday responsibility, cannot be fully defined. It does not coincide with what represents it. It is not exhausted by what is said about it.

In Russia, this difference between the formal and the genuine is especially pronounced. Here, the country has never existed solely as a hierarchy, as a construct. It has always lived below – in those who simply did not step back from their responsibilities. Not for glory, not out of fear, not from habit, but because retreating was impossible. Or, more precisely, because they did not wish to.

They are not quoted. They do not participate in dialogues about the future. They do not seek validation. They work.

Sometimes tiredly. Sometimes silently. But day after day, they continue to do what gives foundation to everything else. They do not represent the country. They are its substance.

Their presence is almost always unacknowledged. They demand no name. They are invisible in grand narratives. Yet without them, nothing holds: neither language, nor land, nor rhythm. They are those who do not leave their role when it becomes awkward. Who continue when others explain why they stopped. Who remain when it would be easier to walk away.

They are not heroes. They are ordinary, stable, inwardly resolved people who do not divide the country into «them» and «us,» but simply take responsibility for what concerns them. Not within ideological frameworks. Not in service mode. But by inner decision: if not me, then who?

The country does not demand agreement with every step. But it demands participation – not in words, not in concepts, but in actions for which no applause is sought. For the country is not sustained by voice. It is sustained by engagement. By the engagement that is invisible, yet without which everything else becomes mere surface.

Every time someone says, «this country is not for me,» somewhere nearby someone continues to do their work. Without

comment. Without defense. Without excess meaning. Simply because they know: if abandoned, if withdrawn, if devalued – nothing will remain. Not because the structure will collapse, but because it is impossible to inhabit a place in which no one is invested.

Thus, I think of the country not as a state. Nor as a set of symbols. But as a network of internal decisions: not to leave, not to simplify, not to accuse, not to abdicate responsibility. These decisions are rarely spoken. They are lived. And in them lies the form of maturity that makes possible something greater than mere survival.

Moscow Dress Code

In this essay, I examine the Moscow dress code as an informal mechanism of urban discipline. I am interested in how visual neutrality and external structure become conditions for inclusion in everyday social processes.

In megacities with high event density and competition for resources, clothing gradually loses its function as self-expression. Instead, it acquires the status of an external interface that regulates primary access to social interaction. Moscow, as an administrative-economic system, has developed a stable model of visual recognition – not codified formally, but functioning with the regularity of an institution.

In this context, the dress code is not etiquette or a fashion gesture, but a filtration mechanism that reduces the transaction costs of urban life. It minimizes time spent on identification, providing rapid visual access to markers of competence, reliability, and contextual inclusion. Violating the visual code does not trigger sanctions, but it automatically lowers the level of trust and accessibility in professional, service, and communicative chains.

This reveals one of the key functions of the dress code:

ordering urban uncertainty. In an environment where deep personal contact is impossible, clothing substitutes for primary biography. It signals the level of self-regulation and the ability to operate within normative boundaries.

In Moscow, as in other large administrative capitals, the dress code is not a tribute to taste or a legacy of bourgeois aesthetics. It is a form of behavioral precision embedded in the overall tempo of urban productivity. Clothing without a system, without understanding the context, or with excessive individuality is perceived not as a cultural trait, but as low adaptability to the urban environment. In this sense, the Moscow dress code should be understood not as a representation of social taste, but as a regulatory mechanism of high density. It is not formalized, but recognized through the uniformity of criteria: cleanliness, structured silhouette, color neutrality, absence of expressive deviations. These parameters cannot be precisely described, yet they are consistently reproduced in mass urban behavior.

The visual code is the result of constant feedback control produced by the city as a system. Appearing outside this norm is not cultural deviation, but a protocol error. It does not provoke overt aggression, but reduces functional trust. In practice, a person dressed «informally» receives less attention, integrates more slowly into role interactions, and is more often outside the focus of structured contact. They are perceived not as different,

but as unprepared.

Thus, clothing in Moscow performs the function of marking suitability for inclusion in the city's logic. This logic is based on tempo, density, and predictability. People who follow the visual code are interpreted as reliable carriers of role behavior. Their presence does not require additional verification; they are «in order.» From a systems theory perspective, this is a form of reducing uncertainty through visual control.

It is essential to emphasize that the Moscow dress code is not a demonstration of status. It is a threshold norm of acceptability. It does not assert superiority, but communicates sufficiency. In this sense, it is closer to technical verification than to cultural expression. A person dressed «appropriately» does not prompt questions about who they are, why they are present, or how functional they are.

Equally important is that the Moscow dress code does not demand excessive visual activity. On the contrary, excessive expressiveness, individualized styling, or a demonstrative refusal of the neutral visual norm is perceived as disrupting the general rhythm of the environment. Such violations are not formalized, but result in exclusion from role dynamics. This is a silent mechanism of social auto-regulation: not a sanction, but non-inclusion.

In this sense, the Moscow dress code operates according to the principle of visual silence. Clothing should be unmarked. It should not «speak»; it should not interfere with reading. In conditions of attention overload, high competition for focus, and limited time, such parameters help maintain relative manageability of the environment.

For this reason, people living and working in Moscow gradually develop a stable model of external neutrality. This is not an act of submission. It is a necessary measure to coordinate with the urban structure, which does not allow unlimited diversity at the level of behavioral surface. A person in an uncontrolled form is perceived as a risk – not in the sense of threat, but in terms of cost: they require interpretation, clarification, explanation. In an environment where there is no time for such actions, this becomes an obstacle.

Therefore, the Moscow dress code is not fashion or a taste system, but a tool for systemic optimization of interpersonal transactions. It makes the city less burdensome precisely because it orders visual uncertainty. An element of clothing here is an element of trust: the «quieter» it is, the more effective it is.

Overall, the Moscow dress code can be defined as a behavioral protocol of minimal sufficiency. It reduces environmental

complexity without compromising openness. It is not closed, but structured. Violating the code is not criminalized, but it excludes. Adhering to the code does not make a person «one of them,» but renders them visible as a participant. This is the minimal price for access to the city's rhythm, where any deviation slows down – not because it is decreed, but because otherwise the system does not function.

This is the essence of the dress code as urban discipline: not to regulate appearance, but to maintain a certain distribution of attention, trust, and inclusion. Moscow, as a socio-productive system, imposes on the participant a minimal but non-negotiable requirement – to be visually integrated. Not according to a template, but according to function. Not to conform, but not to interfere. Violation of this norm does not provoke conflict – it nullifies access. This is the essence of an uncoded yet strict environment: access is granted not by declaration, but by the ability to be read as part of the operational mechanism. The Moscow dress code is not about clothing. It is about the right to be part of the city's structure.

Creativity Is Contagious.

Spread E = Go!

In this essay, I consider creativity as a form of action that emerges at the point where standard methods lose their productivity. My interest lies neither in the psychology of the creative subject nor in aesthetic originality, but in the structure of the breakthrough itself: how, under conditions of systemic stability, a work arises that disrupts automatism and establishes a new norm. I draw on examples from the history of science, architecture, literature, and philosophy (Galois, Gödel, Kuhn, Le Corbusier) to show that creativity is not reproducible as a method, but instead forms local zones of semantic reconfiguration.

History provides ample confirmation: forms of creative work carried out outside institutional demand tend, in the long term, to transform the disciplinary field itself. A paradigmatic case is the French mathematician Évariste Galois, whose work on group theory was rejected by the French Academy of Sciences as «illogical» and «unsuitable for application.» Yet it was precisely his work that determined the future structure of modern algebra. His writings were published only fourteen years after his death, but from that moment on they became foundational for understanding symmetry as a universal category.

A similar pattern can be observed in the history of the arts. Paul Celan's writing and poetic rhythm were long dismissed by literary critics as not constituting «real poetry.» However, by the 1980s, the structure of his language had become normative for the philosophy of language, particularly in the later works of Maurice Blanchot and Jacques Derrida.

Such cases demonstrate that creative intervention, unsupported by the immediate demands of its environment, can nonetheless reconfigure the very system of evaluative coordinates within which it was initially judged excessive. This is not an exception; it is a rule that operates with delay. And it is precisely here that the specificity of creative action lies: it does not rely on recognition, yet over time it produces a new structure of recognition.

Such intervention introduces ontological noise into a normative system that operates through reproducible units. Within the philosophy of technology, this corresponds to the notion of a «contingent malfunction» introduced by Gilbert Simondon: a subject who crosses the boundary of permissible functional action embeds into the system an irreducible module that necessitates the reconfiguration of the entire network.

In stable systems – scientific, administrative, cultural –

predictability is valued. This is linked to the need for repeatability of processes, controllability of outcomes, and formalizability of procedures. Yet such systems are prone to internal exhaustion. Repetition devoid of divergence gradually erodes the distinction between actions. The form remains intact, but it ceases to generate meaning. At this stage, a need arises for a structural disruption – for an action that breaks reproducibility not for the sake of rejection, but for the sake of recalibration.

Creativity should not be understood as an expression of personality. It is not synonymous with «self-expression» or «uniqueness.» A creative act begins with the detection of a functional dead end. This may take the form of a technical limit, an ethical opacity, or a lexical exhaustion. In each case, the subject registers a discrepancy between action and result. The entry point into creativity is the point of overload of the norm, where existing means of action no longer provide sufficient precision or significance.

In mathematics, this situation was articulated by Kurt Gödel in 1931 in his Incompleteness Theorem. In systems sufficiently powerful to express arithmetic, there will always exist statements whose truth cannot be proven within the system itself. The implication is clear: any sufficiently developed system requires a point of exit beyond its own boundaries. This point constitutes the zone of possible creative action. The subject working within

it does not reject the system, but reproduces its limit as a problem that demands a new apparatus.

Creativity is a way of identifying the boundary of applicability of rules and formulating an operation that functions beyond that boundary without destroying the whole. It does not require provocation; it requires conceptual discipline, in which the new does not oppose the old but compels it to function differently. In the philosophy of science, Thomas Kuhn described this structure of action in his conception of scientific revolutions as paradigm shifts – not as hostility between theories, but as the impossibility of continuing within the previous register.

At the level of everyday practice, the same pattern can be observed in any intellectual or artistic work that alters not so much the result as the structure of expectations. When Le Corbusier designed the «house as a machine for living,» he was not pursuing architectural aesthetics. He restructured the question itself: not how housing should look, but how it should function given specific constraints of function, density, and temporal velocity. After him, architecture could no longer be described in the same language – even when it continued, visually, to replicate traditional forms.

These examples show that creative work does not require a dramatic breakthrough. It requires precise calculation under

conditions where previous calculations no longer yield results. It is neither a random gesture nor a deviation. It is a form of re-centering – at the level of the problem, not of style. The individual who performs it acts neither for attention nor for image. Their behavior is rational within the bounds of a task that cannot be solved within older coordinates.

This implies that creativity is not reproduced as linear progression, but as a local intensification of structure, in which it becomes evident that norms previously regarded as universal are in fact historically contingent. Proof is unnecessary; a functioning alternative suffices. Once such an alternative emerges, the system is compelled to respond. Sometimes through resistance, more often through incorporation. In either case, the response confirms the essential point: the prior structure has changed irreversibly.

Such a structure does not permit training by model. Creativity cannot be taught. One can only work within a field where the necessity of precise action renders automatism inadequate. In this field, a person either begins to search independently for a new means, or continues to execute prescribed operations while remaining unaware of their redundancy. The former is productive; the latter stabilizes.

The dissemination of creativity, therefore, is not the

dissemination of knowledge. It is the dissemination of a threshold of tolerance for the unresolved. A single individual operating at a new level raises the irritability of the entire environment. They make insufficiency visible – not through critique, but by demonstrating that another mode of action is possible. After this, inertia becomes a weaker justification.

As Hans Blumenberg observed, «every new beginning arises not from opposition, but from the impossibility of continuation.» Creativity, in this sense, is not a choice, but a necessity for sustaining action at the moment when a rule no longer produces results. Such a position demands not talent, but the capacity to perceive the boundary of applicability – and the readiness to act beyond it.

And Yet

In this text, I examine the word and yet not as a rhetorical turn, but as a philosophically significant structure that allows a person to preserve inner continuity after events that disrupt biographical sequence. My focus is neither linguistics nor the psychology of adaptation, but the minimal forms through which a person continues to think and act after a break – not by compensating, not by nullifying, but by incorporating destruction into a new structure. I argue that and yet performs both a logical and an ethical function: it connects incompatible segments of a life into a line that can be continued without denying what has occurred. In conditions where purpose and order have been lost, such a form of holding becomes necessary.

In every biography there are moments that cannot be explained and cannot be rationally integrated into the general order of life. These are not pauses or temporary gaps, but points of rupture. Failure, loss, separation, exclusion – events that cannot be continued within the logic that preceded them. Such a rupture is always destructive. It breaks the linkage between previous action and the possibility of further choice. What arises is not simply a feeling of loss, but a structural break: former grounds are withdrawn, while new ones have not yet emerged. Without internal means of traversing such zones, life

disintegrates into a sequence of disconnected fragments.

In such situations, a person cannot rely on external help. No institution can restore lost continuity. The core problem here is not what happened, but the loss of the form in which life could proceed. The inner task is not to «get over» the event, but to preserve access to sequence itself. Without this linkage, a person ceases to be the subject of their own life.

The structure of and yet is one of the few instruments through which inner continuity can be restored. It is neither an expression of hope nor a psychological consolation. It is a way of linking two segments of time between which no obvious bridge exists.

Formally, and yet is a simple connective. Functionally, it is an act of thinking. A person who uses and yet does not deny what has happened, does not soften it, does not reinterpret it as positive. They insert the point of rupture into a structure that allows further action. It is an act of holding a line when the line has been broken.

Someone who says, «My cat died – and yet I won the competition,» or «I was rejected – and yet I became independent,» is not describing events. They are redefining their status. What happened does not disappear and does not cease to be negative, but it is placed into a sequence that does not

collapse along with it. This is not an argument. It is a structural redistribution of tension.

Thinking in these terms is not spontaneous. It requires discipline: not to deceive oneself, not to exaggerate the positive, not to invent a reassuring conclusion. Its aim is not persuasion, but the preservation of the functional capacity of consciousness under conditions where external support has collapsed.

Within the philosophy of action, such forms correspond to what Kierkegaard called a «serious decision»: a decision that does not rest on a completed foundation, but maintains inner coherence through an act of personal affirmation.

And yet is not a formula of optimism. It does not mean that things turned out for the better. It does not justify, conclude, or moralize. It functions because it allows continuation without erasure. It keeps life from freezing at the point of rupture.

For this reason, and yet cannot be borrowed or imitated. It arises only from inner necessity. It is not something one offers to another person. It is something one produces within oneself in order to restore the internal movement of time that was interrupted by an event.

On a cultural level, this structure appears in literature where

characters continue not according to genre conventions, but because they have no other form of existence than to go on without clarity. This can be found in Platonov, in Beckett's prose, in the letters of Nathan Zach – wherever there is no goal, but movement remains.

This leads to an important distinction: and yet is not equivalent to «everything happens for a reason.» It does not reconcile, resolve, or console. It refuses capitulation in thinking, because it allows a new phase to begin without annulling the previous one.

A person capable of uttering and yet honestly – without illusion, but with precision – does not demonstrate strength. They demonstrate the minimum required to restore action. This is what maturity consists in: not the ability to avoid rupture, but the ability to preserve form within its logical irreversibility.

This mode of thinking cannot be taught as a technique. It emerges through direct engagement with a reality that fails to meet expectations. It becomes the only way not to disappear after an event, while still keeping it in view.

A form of life based on such continuity does not require external support. It requires an internal order in which the recognition of rupture does not cancel the possibility of continuation. And yet is a minimal – but sufficient – structure

for this task.

Between Generations

In this essay, I reflect on the impossibility of a shared language between generations – not as a social problem, but as a philosophical condition of growing up. What interests me is not the cultural gap as such, but the logic of difference that becomes visible when an adult attempts to enter the speech of the young. I argue that a parent who wants to «speak the same language» violates the function of that speech, because it is not designed for explanation or rapprochement. It produces distance – a distance necessary for the formation of autonomy. In such cases, respect is expressed not through participation, but through the ability not to interfere. It is precisely separation that makes possible a form of closeness in which each remains in their own position without destroying the position of the other.

In any culture, the generational gap is not a deviation from the norm but a mode of its existence. Different generations do not merely have different interests or habits. They think and speak in different registers.

The contemporary digital environment has made this gap especially visible. Youth languages now form far more rapidly than before. They exist in autonomous media ecosystems, constantly update their internal rules, and are oriented not toward the transmission of information, but toward the recognition

of «one's own.»

An adult who attempts to enter this language is not simply late. They alter the very function of speech – a function that seeks to remain unnoticed. When a parent sends a child a «meme,» they act according to a logic of participation. They want to be involved, to establish contact. But the medium through which they attempt this has already lost its force.

Jokes that once functioned as social connectors perform a different task in newer digital generations: not to connect, but to restrict access. They are built on deliberate distortion of language, excess, and chaotic fragmentation of meaning. This is not a matter of «stupidity» or «superficiality,» but of constructing a protected zone that is not easily penetrated.

The impossibility of shared humor between generations is not a cultural malfunction. It is an expression of a deeper difference in how the world is structured. A young person does not want an adult to speak their language, because language here is not merely a tool – it is a marker of age-based autonomy.

When a parent tries to «understand» a joke, it almost always causes irritation. Not because the parent lacks intelligence, but because the joke ceases to function the moment it becomes an object of explanation. Anything that requires explanation stops

being alive.

This is especially evident in digital speech. Where irony is based on intentional absurdity, interpretation destroys the game itself. Adolescent speech is built not on content, but on intonation, speed, and the recognizability of specific gestures. It is an environment in which the main thing is not the joke, but how quickly it is recognized and how little needs to be said explicitly.

A parent cannot be part of this. And should not be. The role of the parent is not to enter the child's speech, but to remain within their own – stable enough to endure estrangement. This is precisely a form of respect. Not respect for fashion, but for the autonomous formation of another person.

In a culture where the idea of «being on the same wavelength» is popular, it is difficult to accept that separation is a more mature form of closeness than imitation of participation. Being close does not mean speaking the same way. Being close means allowing space for a speech that does not coincide with one's own.

This is not isolation. It is the correct distance. It requires nothing from the parent except endurance. To be an adult means not interfering in those areas where one is not expected – and not taking offense at that fact.

A joke is not a bridge between generations. It is a local sign meant for insiders. A parent who understands this does not feel excluded. They remain outside because outside is their natural position at that moment. They have not left. They have not withdrawn. They simply do not violate boundaries.

Perhaps, over time, the adolescent will move beyond this mode of speech. Then the form of dialogue will change. But until that happens, the adult who is capable of not interfering acts more precisely than the one who strives for «accessibility.»

Speech does not tolerate coercion – especially young speech. It is structured to avoid explanation, pressure, and intrusion. Genuine participation here consists in the ability to remain silent at the right distance.

Action / Inaction

In this text, I examine the problem of action and inaction outside a moralistic framework. What interests me is not what appears stronger or more correct, but what disrupts structure: an act performed without grounding, or a refusal to act that conceals participation. I analyze the conditions under which action becomes destructive and inaction becomes complicity, drawing on the ideas of Hannah Arendt, Plato, Kant, and contemporary interpretations of political guilt. The text includes an ethical analysis of how to distinguish the preservation of distance from an evasion of responsibility. Finally, I move to a metaphysical level: every action and every inaction produces consequences, and the question lies not in choosing between them, but in a person's capacity to hold those consequences as part of their will.

The question of what destroys more – action or inaction – does not allow for an answer in the form of a judgment. It requires an examination of the conditions under which a subject, acting or refraining from action, takes their position to be justified.

Action is not always a virtue. It can be aggressive, ungrounded, self-appointed. What presents itself as activity often turns out to be a form of escape from thinking, from analysis, from proportionality. Action deprived of grounding produces consequences for which no one is prepared to take responsibility.

In this sense, action cannot be assessed outside context: who acts, when, for what purpose, and whether they are capable of accepting the consequences of their intervention.

Inaction is not always weakness. It can be a form of endurance, a refusal of imposed participation, a point at which the subject acknowledges that not every form of involvement is legitimate, not every intervention appropriate. But inaction can also be a form of guilt – where it conceals cowardice, consent, or a reluctance to interrupt destruction.

The history of the twentieth century offers both examples. The political inaction of millions made possible crimes resisted by only a few. Indifference framed as non-interference became a structure of permissibility. In such cases, inaction destroys more than violence: it creates a space in which the actions of others become irreversible.

At the same time, activism without analysis, intervention without measure, the attempt to «correct» without a clear grounding, lead to consequences no less destructive. The desire to participate without understanding renders action uncontrollable. What begins as justice can end as coercion, because the force of action is not balanced by a boundary.

For this reason, the question «which is worse» is wrongly

posed. The more precise question is: under what conditions is a person able to act not out of habit, and not out of refusal, but from a clear understanding of the boundary beyond which they cease to be indifferent – and cease to be destructive.

At this point, neither emotion nor morality is decisive. What matters is discipline: thinking before intervening; seeing the structure before breaking it; holding back when action is merely an extension of one's own uncertainty; stepping in when inaction becomes a form of consent to what cannot be allowed.

A person capable of distinguishing these states does not measure themselves by the number of actions performed. They correlate their activity with the reality they may damage or sustain. Their measure is not efficiency, but precision. Not activity, but readiness to answer for inclusion or withdrawal.

In a world where public space demands constant engagement, inaction takes on the form of scandal. But in a world where any intervention is presented as courage, action itself can become mere mimicry – a form of belonging to the flow.

Both can be justified. Both can be destructive. The difference lies in the structure of grounding.

Where a person acts or refrains not out of fear, not out

of inertia, but from an understanding of the situation, their choice does not articulate a position, but responsibility.

In political philosophy, the problem of action and inaction becomes especially acute when an individual position enters into relation with a system. Political action always carries a dual status: it either intervenes in an established order or confirms it. Inaction, correspondingly, either refuses legitimation or becomes a form of tacit approval.

Hannah Arendt captured this tension in Eichmann in Jerusalem. Administrative inaction – legally correct and outwardly «neutral» – under certain conditions becomes direct complicity. It is precisely inaction devoid of an internal position that allows institutional evil to function without obstruction. It does not produce violence, but it cancels the possibility of interrupting it.

Yet political activity without grounding is also subject to critique – already in Plato, and later in Rousseau and Kant. A person engaged in politics without philosophical preparation, without a sense of measure, without distinguishing the private from the common, acts as an element of a crowd rather than as a free citizen. Thus emerges a form of action that appears courageous, but in substance generates new dependencies.

Ethics begins where a person ceases to act according to an external script. It begins with a refusal of inert participation – and of inert refusal. Ethics demands not an act as such, but the development of a criterion by which an act becomes justified. Without such a criterion, action is a form of pressure; inaction, a form of withdrawal.

From a metaphysical perspective, both action and inaction are forms of presence. Neither disappears from reality. Even silence produces consequences. The world is not divided into those who «influence» and those who «step aside.» Everything that has form acts.

Refusal to participate is also participation. It produces a field in which the actions of others intensify. Non-intervention alters the structure of a situation: it either liberates or weakens resistance. A person who steps into the shadows becomes a background for another's will.

Thus, the philosophical formulation of the question «which is worse» loses its meaning. What matters is something else: what level of responsibility a person is capable of holding – in action or outside it. If they refuse to act, do they recognize that refusal reshapes the field? If they act, do they accept that they intervene in another's possibility?

Inaction can be an honest form of ethical position. But it cannot be empty. Just as action cannot be mechanical. In each case, a person must answer not what they did, but why they considered it permissible in that situation.

Freedom in the political sense is not a choice between activity and passivity. It is the capacity to relate oneself to the consequences of what one has produced – or allowed.

Where Does Strength Reside?

In this essay, I examine strength as a derivative of the structure of one's immediate connections. My central thesis is that a person realizes their potential not autonomously, but within the limits of what is permitted by their environment. In this context, the environment is not a social backdrop but a functional framework that determines which efforts are perceived as appropriate, feasible, and sustainable. Without an environment capable of sustaining a high intensity of action, even a strong will is either suppressed or dissipated. I proceed from the assumption that strength is not an internal resource, but a form of normalization of effort within a given configuration of relationships. The essay is written as an attempt to extract this condition from habitual notions of individuality and self-sufficiency.

The concept of strength is applicable to a person insofar as they are embedded in a structure that allows effort to be realized. Outside such a structure, strength remains a formless possibility. The conditions under which will acquires an operative range are determined not only by internal potential, but also by the external composition of the environment.

The environment delineates the contour of permissible decisions. It defines the framework of what is considered

realizable, justified, acceptable in terms of effort and outcome. An individual cannot sustain a high level of actional tension without an external configuration that permits or reflects this level.

A figure deprived of an environment does not disappear, but loses scale. Its will remains theoretical. Resistance from the environment either dampens intensity or turns it into an isolated anomaly. Only at the point where subjective intention coincides with external acceptability does a functional structure of strength emerge.

If a person regularly interacts with four participants for whom cruelty is an acceptable mode of behavior, their involvement in such practices ceases to be an exception. If they are embedded in a group where material and intellectual discipline is high, their own standard is adjusted automatically.

The environment does not explain, does not shape views, does not persuade. It normalizes behavior through the everyday configuration of what is permitted. The structure of the norm is reproduced silently, through a rhythm of decisions and reactions that do not require articulation.

Psychology is secondary to these mechanisms. A person adapts perception and will to the prevailing system of constraints

and allowances. The ethical parameters of the environment are translated into bodily and behavioral economy.

From this follows the conclusion: strength is not a characteristic of an isolated subject. It is a function of one's position within a network in which tension is not only bearable, but required. An environment that does not allow supra-normative effort nullifies subjective initiative. An environment oriented toward sustaining intensity structures the personality, rendering it operational.

Under such conditions, a person acts not in spite of, but in accordance with permission. Their effort is not a heroic exception, because those around them do not obstruct its manifestation. On the contrary, they presuppose it as a necessary component of the overall form.

Thus, the environment is not a sum of contacts, but an infrastructure of permissibility. Within this infrastructure, the scale a person can reach is formed – a scale that does not destroy the self and does not exceed the limits of one's own reproducibility.

Finding Yourself Face to Face...

In this essay, I address a practical and disciplinary problem: how to speak with a person you do not know, on a topic in which you are not confident. I analyze the structure of the first question as a tool that determines the course of the conversation. I explain how to maintain one's position when one does not command the material, and why the key lies not in the content of the question, but in how it is aligned with the scale of the interlocutor. The essay is addressed to journalists, analysts, students – to anyone who works in live situations where there is no time for preparation, yet precision and dignity must be preserved.

In any live situation, the first word decides more than everything that follows. It determines whether a conversation will take place at all – especially when you do not know who stands before you, or which topic you are about to touch upon.

When you do not possess the material, your task is not to conceal this, but to relate correctly to your own position. You must not demonstrate competence you do not have. But you can maintain a form in which lack of knowledge does not turn into weakness.

The point of entry is not a topical question, but a correct

clarification of context. If you do not understand what is being discussed, ask: «From which perspective are you looking at what is happening right now?» This allows the other person to speak within their own coordinates, without adjusting to yours.

In conversation with an unfamiliar interlocutor, it is important not to rush toward the essence. Begin with what creates a condition of trust: a formulation that is fixed, neutral, yet open. For example: «You often work in conditions that are difficult to grasp from the outside. What should one pay attention to first in order to avoid distortion?» Such a question is neither superficial nor provocative, but immediately invites the interlocutor to speak precisely.

If you find yourself in a situation where you must ask a question without mastering the subject, do not look for something «sharp» – look for something fundamental. The best question in such a case is: «What do you consider an oversimplification when your field is discussed from the outside?» This relieves tension and returns initiative to the one who knows.

The main rule is not to intervene in the subject until you understand the level at which your interlocutor is accustomed to conducting the conversation. People rarely refuse to answer when they feel respect for the scale of their thinking. And they

almost always close off when they sense that someone merely wants to «extract material» from them.

Do not ask for explanations. Ask for clarifications. This minimal difference makes dialogue workable. The question «What do you think?» is often useless. Better are questions like: «How would you sharpen the main risk of what is happening now?» or «Which point of view, in your opinion, is currently underrepresented?»

Conversation is not about mutual openness. It is about a precise distance at which one person can be understood, and the other does not lose self-respect. This distance is set by the first question. If it is imprecise, the conversation disintegrates into remarks. If it is posed correctly, it saves dozens of minutes.

When you find yourself face to face with someone, it is better to be cautious than informed. Better to clarify than to make an inaccurate entry. Better to let the other speak than to try to shorten the exchange. This is not a matter of «good manners.» It is an effective strategy in any environment where you do not set the rules.

You'll Live Long Enough – You'll Understand

In this essay, I examine the widespread notion of maturity as a consequence of age. I am interested in why life experience does not always lead to inner depth, and in the difference between outwardly mature behavior and genuine stability.

The idea of maturity as a direct result of age is a cultural convention. The phrase «you'll live long enough – you'll understand» implies that experience automatically produces clarity. This is false. Time in itself does not create maturity. It only creates conditions in which a person may either build an inner structure or reproduce a defensive mechanism.

Maturity is not the result of a long life, but the consequence of an ability to endure complexity without simplifying it away. A person becomes mature not when they stop making mistakes, but when they accept their limitations without fleeing into justification. This is not a position of strength. It is the discipline of seeing what one does not wish to acknowledge – and not collapsing under that vision.

Maturity is not guaranteed by outward behavior. Calmness,

restraint, consistency can be signs of maturity, but they can just as easily be symptoms of psychological closure. Silence may indicate composure, but it may also conceal fear. Acceptance may arise from understanding, or it may be a manifestation of learned helplessness. Behavior is an incomplete marker. It does not answer the question of the depth of one's position.

A person may appear immature – emotional, impulsive, vulnerable – and yet possess a more stable and more responsible inner structure than someone who maintains composure by avoiding confrontation with themselves. Maturity lies not in control, but in the ability to live with uncertainty without replacing it with a schematic substitute.

A mature person is capable of acknowledging guilt without performance, making choices without external support, abandoning illusions without an immediate turn toward cynicism. They do not search for culprits and do not rely on borrowed righteousness. They correlate actions with consequences, without shifting responsibility onto circumstances or onto others.

Age provides an opportunity – but no guarantee. To live long is not the same as to develop. One may repeat the same explanatory pattern for decades. One may accumulate biography without advancing in the understanding of one's own logic. Experience

without analysis turns into confirmation of prior beliefs rather than work on oneself.

Psychological maturity is neither the accumulation of knowledge nor the control of emotions. It is the ability to act within complexity without reducing it to a convenient model. It is precision in assessing oneself and others. It is the capacity not to destroy the surrounding environment even when inner balance is absent.

For this reason, maturity is determined not by words, not by intonation, and not by social status. It is determined by a person's position in relation to themselves. Either one is capable of not simplifying – or one will reproduce simplified explanations. Either one can bear responsibility – or one will search for a language in which responsibility can be avoided.

In this sense, maturity is not a universal trait, but a mode of existence that may arise, disappear, and be restored. It is not granted once and for all. It must be sustained. And the one who is capable of recognizing it is not the one who looks at behavior, but the one who looks at the structure of decisions.

QWERTY

I wrote this text to fix a simple but important mechanism: how accidental technical decisions turn into norms that no one revisits. QWERTY is a particular example. It shows how a decision once made continues to operate simply because it is difficult to undo. What interests me is not the history of the keyboard, but the way everyday life places a person inside standards they did not choose, yet are compelled to reproduce. This is a question of how order becomes fixed – not through reflection, but through repetition.

The QWERTY layout is a standard that emerged by chance. It was designed in the nineteenth century for mechanical typewriters in order to prevent keys from jamming. The solution addressed a specific device and a specific technical problem. The problem eventually disappeared, but the solution remained. The reason is inertia. Once technology, training, and production adapted to QWERTY, changing it became economically and practically disadvantageous. People grew accustomed to it. Systems solidified. The resistance to change proved stronger than the need for reconsideration.

QWERTY demonstrates how irrational solutions become norms. Not because they are optimal, but because they were institutionalized first. Repetition turns the temporary into the

permanent.

This is not an exception. It is the rule. Most of the standards a person encounters daily were formed outside any personal choice. No one chose the keyboard layout, the format of reports, the school curriculum, or the structure of a browser window. These decisions were made earlier. Later, it simply became inconvenient to change them.

QWERTY is not about keys. It is about how we live inside decisions none of us made. They function not because they are better, but because they are stable enough to avoid being questioned.

This is how modernity operates: not through choice, but through repetition; not through argument, but through habit. And the most resilient system is the one no one feels the need to discuss.

Untimely Departures

Dedicated to Diogo Jota, Mark Snow, and Julian McMahon

This essay is a philosophical reflection on three nearly simultaneous deaths – those of Diogo Jota, Mark Snow, and Julian McMahon. I did not know them personally, yet each became significant for me – not because of their cultural stature, but as figures connected to key episodes in my own experience. The text does not evaluate their work; it examines how private memory is shaped from fragments of the external cultural field, and how the death of a person with whom one had no direct contact can nonetheless produce a structural impact. I am noting not loss, but a shift: the disappearance of those who served as stable reference points. This is not an emotional reaction or a commemorative gesture, but a work with what persists after disappearance.

Within two days, news came of the deaths of three public figures: Diogo Jota, Mark Snow, and Julian McMahon. These events were unrelated biographically, professionally, or culturally. Yet their near-simultaneous departure prompted a reflection: certain human figures continue to participate in personal memory regardless of the formal scale of their achievements.

Each of these individuals entered my field of attention at different times. Contact was one-sided: through a screen, sound, or broadcast. Yet it left a durable imprint on the structure of my experience. Not because they were culturally significant, but because they became linked to moments of my own formation.

At the age of five, I first saw a «Fantastic Four» disc on a store shelf. My parents refused to buy it. A few years later, I watched the film at a friend's place. Of the entire content, I remembered only one actor – Julian McMahon. His behavior on screen differed from typical acting choices. He did not display inner states or rely on expressive accents. His role was organized around a consistent line of behavior. This became an example of how to act consistently within a given frame without resorting to external markers of expression.

Mark Snow became known to me through the musical theme for The X-Files. I heard it repeatedly over time. I did not analyze it as a musical structure. Yet it formed a stable auditory perception in which the content did not require interpretation. This theme became for me a model of concise musical expression, free from excess.

Diogo Jota entered my observation later. I was not among his supporters, but his model of behavior impressed me. He participated in the game without episodic flourishes. His actions

did not seek attention. He did not display initiative unnecessarily. Yet he never fell out of the game's process. This allowed me to regard him as an example of a disciplined, consistent, and reliable professional.

None of these three figures were models in a direct sense. Yet each became part of my private experience as a point of orientation – not in morality or culture, but in the domain of everyday precision. Their actions registered for me as permissible models of behavior in specific contexts. This is their significance.

For this reason, the news of their deaths did not elicit an emotional reaction but became a matter of deliberate attention. They departed not because they exhausted their potential, but because they found themselves in circumstances that did not allow continuation. Each departure became for me an example of how memory structures itself independently of public significance.

This essay is not an expression of gratitude or a symbolic act of respect. Its purpose is to record that, in a brief span of time, three people left life, each of whom at some point became a source of orientation for me. Their work, within their respective domains, continues to operate within my memory. For this reason, their departure feels untimely – not in terms of their

biographies, but in terms of how they continued to participate in the structure of my perception.

Thank you.

Evil as a Benefit

In this essay, I examine the phenomenon of actions that are judged as evil but later produce outcomes recognized as positive. My focus is not on evaluating specific episodes but on the logic by which consequences come to determine the permissibility of the act itself. I distinguish between action and outcome as a foundational principle for ethical reflection and show that collapsing this distinction leads to substituting responsibility with mere efficiency. The essay is an attempt to hold the boundary between what happened and how it happened.

The fact that some actions initially interpreted as destructive eventually result in outcomes deemed positive is not exceptional. History provides ample examples in which cruelty, coercion, or violence were accompanied by consequences considered purposeful or «necessary.» The question is how such retrospective logic affects ethical judgment and the political structures that allow it.

The expression «evil with positive consequences» violates intuitive ethical boundaries. It suggests that an act condemned at the moment of execution may post facto gain the status of justified. This narrowing of distinction between basis and result is not merely a moral concession – it is a methodological

undermining of the principle of differentiation on which politics, as a rational practice, rests.

If the consequences of an action can redefine its nature, then in conditions of uncertainty any act – regardless of means – may be deemed justified. This creates a situation where responsibility is replaced by effectiveness, and decision-making is subordinated to outcome.

The political history of the twentieth century demonstrates how this logic operates on the scale of states. Mass violence, repression, suppression of internal opposition – all were later described as necessary measures to strengthen institutions, maintain cohesion, or navigate crises. Such reasoning replaces evaluation of the act itself with evaluation of its consequences. Meanwhile, the subject of responsibility disappears: the agent is judged no longer by what they did, but only by what resulted.

Ethics, grounded in the distinction between good and evil, does not permit substituting the act with its consequences. It insists that certain forms of action remain impermissible even if they produce desired outcomes. In this sense, the tension between political and moral domains is preserved rather than dissolved. Politics operates on results; ethics on grounds. Attempting to equate them opens space for arbitrariness disguised as necessity.

At the individual level, the distinction retains significance. A person whose action yields positive outcomes is not absolved from moral scrutiny. On the contrary, they must acknowledge that a favorable result does not resolve the question of the act's permissibility. The simplified logic «if it turned out well, it was right» undermines both ethical foundation and political responsibility.

Anthropologically, humans have learned to use the consequences of evil. Through trauma, they construct experience; through rupture, understanding; through loss, structure. Yet none of these processes eliminates judgment: the act that caused harm remains an act demanding assessment. Experience does not annul the basis; it only shapes the practice of overcoming.

Nations, cultures, and states are capable of justifying events that were terrifying in the moment because memory is functional. It transforms suffering into argument, destruction into prehistory, violence into stage. This allows life to proceed, but at the cost of erasing distinction. Therefore, any civilization wishing to remain lawful must insist on separating what is permissible from what merely proves useful.

When justification of evil relies on outcomes, politics loses

stability. It becomes a function of interpretation. Whoever controls interpretation controls the moral status of actions. In a system where consequences outweigh principles, power becomes the sole criterion of rightness – a return to a pre-ethical state.

Thus, the possibility of positive outcomes does not negate the status of the act. Accepting that evil can be justified by results is abandoning the idea of moral grounding. Preserving the distinction between action and consequence maintains politics as a domain of will and responsibility, not merely a mechanism of outcomes.

This essay records the tension not to resolve it, but to remind that in any system where action is justified post facto, the capacity for adequate ethical evaluation disappears. And with it, the possibility of a stable political position vanishes.

Hard to Be a God

This essay examines the tension between knowledge and action, necessity and limitation, understanding and the impossibility of translating it into decision. The position of a knowing subject – possessing information but deprived of authority – is simultaneously tragic and disciplinary. Its structure is paradoxical: the one capable of foreseeing destruction cannot prevent it without violating the very fabric of development. One knows, but cannot act; or acts, and thereby forfeits the legitimacy of their position.

Situations in which knowledge outruns events raise questions not of technical intervention, but of ethical and political permissibility. To «be a god,» in this context, means occupying a stance in which human history is observed in slow motion, while the pace of decay itself cannot be interrupted without abandoning the boundaries of another's freedom.

Such figures recur within social dynamics: a scholar observing the collapse of an educational system; an engineer seeing a project's failure yet bound by procedure; an intellectual analyzing the terminal degradation of public language but denied access to the point of correction. In all these cases, reality is composed of elements whose inertia exceeds consciousness.

Knowledge unaccompanied by means of influence becomes a source of inner tension. It generates not power, but the burden of responsibility without the right to act. This is the essence of the «divine» position: clarity exists, but the instrument does not.

The ethical challenge can be framed thus: if you know more, yet your intervention would destroy what is not yet ready for change, do you have the right to refrain from acting? There is no universal answer. It is always situational. Yet the structural pattern remains: any action grounded in superior knowledge shifts responsibility from the actor to the affected. The flip side of action is a new form of dependency.

This tension is particularly acute in political contexts. Regimes that maintain institutional integrity frequently encounter expert knowledge indicating growing defects. Decisions about intervention are always deferred: intervening disrupts procedure, while non-intervention preserves the illusion of order.

A systemic contradiction emerges: either act prematurely, violating the autonomy of the environment, or wait until consequences become irreversible. Here lies the difficulty of the position – knowledge is not aligned with the legitimacy of action. This is no longer a matter of choice; it is the architecture of unfreedom under awareness.

A human subject in this position experiences not guilt, but ontological displacement: they exist in a reality where the potential for action is spread across time and does not coincide with the moment of necessity. They can see destruction, predict its trajectory, yet any intervention before it is requested will be interpreted as violence.

Thus is formed the zone of tension between knowledge and action. This zone is not ethically neutral. It demands restraint, where the refusal to act is not inactivity, but a means of avoiding the exacerbation of destruction when intervention is misaligned with the measure of the environment. To «be a god» is not to stand above. It is to exist within a temporal frame where information outruns possibility, and where thought has no right to realization unless it aligns with the internal needs of the environment rather than an external correction.

This is a philosophical model, but it describes concrete states: observing what one cannot change because the scale of perception does not match the scale of development. This is not tragedy; it is the structure of contemporary thinking: seeing more, acting less, because action without legitimacy would destroy the conditions for proper development.

Preparation for the Unexpected

This essay examines the phenomenon of preparing for the unforeseen as a fundamental condition for resilient action under uncertainty. The starting point is the observation of animal play – behavior that is not instrumentally necessary, yet significant in the perspective of potential disruption. I show that analogous forms exist in human practice, primarily in childhood games, which cultivate readiness for situations without predetermined rules. In cultures that exclude deviation and demand measurable results, the capacity to act outside of a script disappears. The essay emphasizes the importance of forms that do not produce immediate outcomes but preserve the possibility of continued action when order is disrupted.

The title phrase refers to behavioral patterns observed in animals under conditions that do not demand immediate response. These actions are not instrumentally goal-directed. Their appearance is not linked to an external threat or a direct task. Yet they are not random: they are regular, repeatable, and observable in stable conditions. Behavior that lacks immediate function acquires significance in another dimension – in the context of possible future states.

From a philosophical standpoint, this model of behavior can

be defined as non-goal-oriented preparation for the uncertain. It is not directed at a result, because the result cannot be predicted in advance. The environment for which the organism prepares is neither a known danger nor a predetermined task, but a potential disruption, deviation, or anomaly that cannot be classified until it occurs.

Humans possess analogous forms of practice, but their status is fundamentally different. They are confined to childhood, leisure, and informal activity. In childhood games – hide-and-seek, tag, shifting role structures – a person learns to participate in processes whose rules are fluid and outcomes indeterminate. These games do not model specific situations but cultivate behavioral plasticity: the ability to remain engaged amid changing conditions.

In adulthood, such preparation largely disappears from recognized forms of activity. Contemporary social and institutional mechanisms revolve around the planned and measurable. Unstructured participation is not tolerated. Deviation from norms is seen as error; behavior outside the script is treated as a threat to efficiency.

Consequently, most formal systems exhibit low resilience when confronted with the unexpected. They may be informed but remain ineffectual. Preparation for the unforeseen in the

humanistic sense is not the expansion of an inventory of tools; it is the cultivation of an operative stance in which participation is possible without predetermined coordinates. This stance cannot be taught through disciplinary instruction; it requires an environment in which uncertainty is permitted – not as a failure, but as a potential condition.

Historically, such forms existed: in ritual practices, play, and trial structures. They were embedded in culture as modes of engagement when the goal was undefined. Today they are relegated to the periphery. Instructions, algorithms, and simulations have replaced them. Yet when confronted with genuinely unpredictable events, none of these substitute forms retain efficacy.

Play, in the strict sense, models action without guarantee of completion. It reproduces not a plot, but the logic of responding to change. This is its significance: when the script is unavailable, play remains the only means of sustaining engagement.

Preparation for the unexpected is possible only where the necessity of behavior that cannot be reduced to goal-directedness is recognized. Play, experience of deviation, and structured uncertainty are elements without which resilience in a changing world cannot be reproduced. Play. Engage in meaningful play.

Love is...

This essay examines love as a form of sustained relation to another person, in which their presence retains significance regardless of circumstances. It is not about feeling or emotion, but about a position in which another is embedded in the structure of one's actions, decisions, and restraint. Love is understood as a measure through which one maintains another without substitution or expectation of reciprocation.

The word «love» is used casually, yet it points to something difficult to articulate. It appears so often in daily speech that its meaning risks dilution. Yet, whenever it is invoked seriously, it refers not to impulse or desire, but to a person who has entered the sphere of your responsibility – not out of duty, but through an internal shift in measure.

Love is neither coincidence nor confirmation. It is the presence of another person within the boundaries of your choice. Not as an object, not as a cause, not as a response, but as someone whose existence you now must reckon with. Their presence transforms your position – not superficially, but at the level where your life can no longer be imagined without accounting for them.

You may not know exactly what binds you. You may receive

no acknowledgment. This changes nothing. If a person remains in your thoughts, in your decisions, in your actions – not out of obligation, but because you cannot do otherwise – that is love. Without romance. Without protection. Without a guarantee of reciprocity.

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