



The Human Tragedy

a personal comment to history

by Christian Lanciai (1971)

translated 1989 with suggested adjustments by Leslie Pendrill.

Semitreides:

Alas! O Hellas! What has happened to you? What went wrong with your history? It is now ninety years since Pericles died and our glorious city of Athens thereby was doomed to destruction owing to the lack of competent leaders in our war against Sparta. Ever since that day rising barbarity and torment has ravaged all over Greece. Our good divine mother Athena, why do you allow such tragedies to ruin our bosom city, and father Zeus, why do you hate Hellas, since you make it rot to death in this dreadful epidemic of utterly meaningless violence and feud?

I am a poor playwright of comedies without any influence to stop this universal tragedy. I fashion comedy plots, laugh at society, love my wife and drink with my friends, because that is what everyone is doing, but in silence my heart is bleeding in pain, and I believe that most people have similar heart aches; because no one can shut his eyes from the sight of the most painful destiny which has begun working on the ruin of our so magnificent nation.

In my youth I watched Socrates empty his final chalice. Once I was also an ardent admirer of the handsome Alcibiades, which he in the course of time made me regret most bitterly, for was not he the very one who in ruthless egoism and total irresponsibility finally caused the utter humiliation of Athens to the unworthy nation of Sparta?

Pericles, Cimon, Themistocles, Aristides, why did you all vanish and leave no one behind? Why is it impossible for such men to always remain with us and grace our world by their presence? And why did Plato refrain from a natural political career? He was as bright in his academy as ever Pericles in the Areopagus!

Also Aristophanes disappointed us all by not becoming a proper statesman. And however did such a hopeful character as Epaminondas manage to grow up in such a place as Thebes? Whoever put him to soil his feet with mud from a ground that was unworthy of his foot-steps? If such a man had been brought up here in Athens, unity and peace might today have flourished all over Hellas.

And what will become of the only hope of Athens of today, our garrulous friend Demosthenes? He has already all too thoroughly twice been defeated by the half-barbarian Philip from the north. Whatever can a true Hellene do for Hellas if he is not even able to vanquish a sole barbarian? And what an awful token is this of how deep down the Hellenic nation and people already have gone!

I may be fortunate being already old and close enough to death, for I fear that in the future Hellas will have to face sorrows even greater than those she already desperately contends with.

If only my youth could be returned to me so that I could live wholly in the past! Imagine to have experienced together with Aeschylus the battle of Salamis! We, the most hearty and loyal supporters of Hellas, all live in the wrong century. If I today lived in the age of Aeschylus I would be a tragedian like him and greater as such than the decadent Euripides. It is even possible that I would be a personal friend of the noble Sophocles. But what is the purpose of dreams? The ever remindful naked skeleton of reality will ever remain even more heartless, hopeless and joyless than when you tried vainly to leave it behind.

In ancient days people never grew old. A man then never had the opportunity to suffer from age or even from the loss of his youth, because his children always had a cheerful future to welcome which certainly would surpass everything experienced in the past. But now I see more and more admirable men who all complain of their age and of the vanity of youth. I have even met one or other most venerable Athenian who has displayed alarming traits of senility already at the age of seventy! This

development is in my opinion the most appalling evidence of the desperate decline of our age and people.

But what are those loud rumours coming from the north? What is everyone suddenly shouting about? Who has been killed? King Philip of Macedonia has been assassinated! This is verily most shocking news. If he is really dead all hope has gone, for even though he was a barbarian he was the only reliable promise for the future of Hellas.

But they say he has a remarkable son. Is he able enough to shoulder his father's burden? If he is I think I might in spite of all find peace in my grave. There are even some who have more faith in him than they had in his father.

I am extremely old, and I expect death to catch up with me at any moment. Hoping that this young Alexander will be something for the world to expect something of, I leave my word to someone else in the young king's vicinity who still has some youth left in him to enjoy. And with that I take my leave from this solemn scene of history. Farewell.

The letters of Perdiccas:

My dear sister Clytaemnestra, I am writing this letter at Sestus by the Hellespont. In front of me glittering under the eastern sun is the splendid blue water spreading itself beyond which the Persians are expecting us. I used to fear them in battle, but my lord Alexander, who gradually is becoming familiar to me, has now with his indomitable courage entirely cured me of all my fears. He has inspired me to believe, my beloved sister, that the world has a wonderful future in store for us.

Seleucus was recently here visiting me in my tent. I am convinced that he will be far advanced before we return to Pella.

Dear sister, I will write many more letters in the future as often as possible, but please promise me not to worry about me without sufficient reason, and I will promise to tell you all that will happen to us on the Persian battle-fields. And if the gods are with us, which I have reason to believe they are, I will even promise you to soon be back with you home in Pella.

Your most pious brother Perdiccas.

My dearest sister,

I am writing this during the night at the plain of Issus to the east from Tarsus. I have seen the Persian Great King today, and imagine, that he was actually fleeing! He fled before the fiery basilisk eye of my Alexander, and the soldiers have cracked some jokes about it. They say that in the figure of Alexander king Dareius saw the ghost of Cyrus threateningly curse him for his poor government in Persepolis. And he most probably ran all the way home to Persepolis, this surprising coward of a Great King. Mind you, our army was surely less than half of the Persian giant army.



For some reason which I cannot understand Alexander seems to increasingly slight Parmenio. I most sincerely hope there will be no clash between them, for Alexander needs Parmenio, and Parmenio needs Alexander. They are probably the two most indispensable personalities of our age at the moment.

I have also come to know the friend of Alexander, Hephaestion, better, together with the cleverhead Eumenes. This Hephaestion is a strange person. I wonder what Alexander gets out of him, because I myself find nothing in him. He is polite and amiable, but that is all. I hope to know him better.

As you will be sure to understand from this merry letter written immediately after a most victorious day, I lack nothing. I am entirely well, and today on the battlefield I actually felt like some invulnerable god. All I got was a scratch in my right arm, but that will heal faster than we face new battles, which will be fast indeed.

My only worry is the king. I now know he is in fact the frailest of all living beings, and his ideology is not sound. I don't find Achilles a very admirable person, and I can't understand why Alexander makes him his ideal. I would prefer Ulysses as a more constructive and wholesome model. Achilles died young, while Ulysses by caution and wisdom lived to grace his throne until his old age. But I must not criticize my king, and I am sure Hephaestion will take good care of him.

Once more good-bye, my dearest sister, and I promise to write again as soon as I get the opportunity, which from now on unfortunately will most probably be even more rarely than heretofore, since Alexander is bolting on the way of life, and we have to increasingly strain ourselves to the limits of our faculties to keep an even run with him, since we are his own soldiers. The last rumours from his tent are not very soothing. He has stated that he wishes to enter Persepolis.

But do not worry about any of us, dearest sister, because we all certainly intend to return to Macedonia before we have lost all our youth.

Your own faithful brother Perdicas.

My sister Clytaemnestra,

I am writing this letter at the heart of the world, in the palace of the Persian Great King at Persepolis. You will hardly believe that I write the truth when you peruse this letter, but thou shalt know, that even though I hardly dare believe it myself it is nothing but the truth. We are living in a fairy tale. The name of it is Reality, and it is the most unbelievable of all fairy tales.

But the most astonishing fact of all is that Alexander is not satisfied. Imagine, that a king from rustic Macedonia assumes the dignity and situation of the Great King of Persia and yet remains dissatisfied! He wants the skin and bones of Darius himself, and only the gods know what more he will want after that!

It will probably take as many years for me to return to Pella as it has taken years for us to arrive here, but do not despair, for when I finally return I will no longer be the young ridiculous Perdicas, but you will find me enlightened and highly developed as a full character, and my heart and mind will be educated to bring you all more joy at home than ever would have been possible with me as a home-made philosopher or even as a pupil of the very Plato himself. For nothing is more edifying and wholesome for a man than splendid adventure! And we are now experiencing perhaps the greatest adventure of all ages, and I intend to cling to it to the bitter end.

The lives of the wives of Darius are immeasurably more barbaric than I ever thought possible in the circumstances of royalties. A shepherdess from Epirus has greater qualifications than these shameless furies confined to professional debauchery in a lifetime harem prison.

Please instruct as many as possible of our magnificent adventures, for surely we would like to share them with the entire world!

Your brother Perdicas.

My dear beloved sister far back home in our Pella so much missed and longed for, If you ever receive this letter written in a city called Taxila in far away India on the other side of the world, which is the first prominent city which we have seen since Persepolis, so thank the gods with generous offerings for its having reached its destination in spite of all. Pray to them and sacrifice to them also for the sake of my fading comrades, for we are all longing for our homes, which appear more distant and unreachable than ever. They seem so far away that we actually sometimes doubt the possibility of ever seeing them again.

The army of Alexander is greater than ever, but we Macedonians are fewer than ever. We war together with strangers, and we do it only for Alexander's sake, for even though we don't recognize him any more since he has become an Asian emperor we still love him.

Parmenio is dead. In Parthia a few of us Macedonians were stupid enough to plot against Alexander's life, and when this was detected many innocents had to suffer, and the foremost of these was Parmenio. I can't understand why and how Alexander could go through with such a crime. Of all our generals none was as valuable and as praiseworthy as the old Parmenio.

Your friend Cleitus is dead also. I am not familiar with the exact circumstances of his death, but everybody knows that both were drunk when Alexander slaughtered him. He had for a long time been opposed to Alexander's Asian totalitarian ideas.

Where does he intend to lead us, this amazing king of ours? He is not mad, but many believe he is well on his way towards no other end. He is dreaming about discovering the eastern ocean beyond India, but I doubt that such an ocean even exists.

He has conquered for himself the greatest realm on earth. Will he now ruin it by leading us all to hell? I am quite worried about him.

Don't you worry about us, though. I still believe in him, and most of the best of us do the same, and as long as he still sometimes deigns to listen to anyone of us there is some hope left that he will grant himself and his fellows the sometime happy reunion with Hellas.

My most personal fancy, which I have nourished all since the death of Parmenio, is to get Alexander back to Hellas from where he would govern the rest of the world as a perfectly Hellenic democratic king. I should like to see him in Athens, I would like to have him as the first and greatest Hellenic citizen at the head of a universal

Hellenic democracy. And if I am able, that's the direction in which I will try to influence him, for he is sure to need true friends, and my chief ambition is to never prove one of the unworthy ones.

My sister, pray to the gods, sacrifice and keep hoping for the best! From here I will turn directly to my orisons.

Thine ever faithful brother Perdicas.

Beloved sister,

It is your brother Perdicas who at last is writing to you again. And he has the most joyous news in the universe in store for you and for all the people of Macedonia. We are on our way back! Spread the news everywhere that we are on our way back!

Our king has vanquished all the nations of the world except one, which his heart now finally has given in to, and that nation is the corpse of his own few remaining Macedonians. We are now returning home with him in triumph.

Thine old brother Perdicas.

To Pausanias from his friend Perdicas who wrote the letter in Susa,

My friend, I haven't seen you for so many years. I hope life is beaming upon you like it is smiling upon the world and the future. I am writing to you to ask of you to tell me all about my sister's death, the exact circumstances and her last words and if there were any omens and in that case of what nature these might have been. All I know is that she died of grief partly owing to my all too long absence. I was never overtaken by a sadder message since, as you probably know, she was dearer to me than anyone else. With pleasure would I have sacrificed my life if only I was granted the leisure of a reunion with her alive.

With tender remembrance of all our common memories,

Your friend Perdicas.

My most honourable Eumenes,

Hephaestion is dead. It was too late when I got to know him more closely. Not until during his final illness I somehow managed to find his personality.

I am privately sending you this message to prepare you for the worst. He was the only intimate of Alexander and maybe greater as a human being than Alexander himself. Without him Alexander will hardly be able to bear life for very long since he in the bottom of his heart in fact is weaker than his own demented brother.

On top of everything there was a very solemn omen in Susa. When our Indian prophet Calanus on his deathbed took his leave of Alexander, he said: "We'll meet again in Babylon." And that is where Alexander is heading now.

If you wish to know why Hephaestion died, I think I know the answer: the friendship of a demi-god like Alexander became too much of a burden to him. Alexander's intensity fatigued him to death.

Next to Hephaestion we are the two generals who are closest to Alexander's confidence. If the burden of his greatness now becomes too heavy for him, since he no longer is able to share it with Hephaestion, we have to prepare ourselves in good time for all possible responsibilities.

With sincere respect,

Alexander's friend Perdiccas.

Clytaemnestra, my sister, where art thou? You were the only one who knew me and understood my feelings. Where art thou gone? I need you, I cannot make it without your moral support, more desperately than ever do I miss your ever understanding and never tiring attention and loyalty!

Alexander is dead. World, prepare for chaos! Gush forth, all ye rivers of blood from never ceasing warfare, ravage the earth, all mortal enemies of mankind, and perish, all ye harmless and loyal lovers of peace! Once more all the hope of the world has faded into nothing and this time even before it had had a chance to establish itself. For Alexander never became a true Hellene, and his civilisation was never endowed with the perfect light of classical culture and harmony, although it was well on its way.

Once more civilisation is rent in twain and more by civil war, and once more the appearance of the future is darkened by overwhelming hopelessness, for the only hope there was was impersonated by our king who now is dead and gone forever. Only he could have restored Hellenic order and democracy and the cultural paradise of classical light, harmony and beauty. Why didn't he do it? All ye gods in heaven, why was he not allowed to fulfil his magnificent mission?

The last king of Pergamum:

My friends, let us once more ascend the Acropolis together to enjoy the twilight of a peaceful summer evening. Abandon your occupations, for you have done well for today, and come with me instead to indulge in the loveliness and fragrance of nature, the evening, our society and our age. For who knows whether we shall ever again be enabled to enjoy another dawn of civilisation?

Behold this lovely realm! For the duration of almost two centuries it has now served the world with knowledge and art, science and humanism. It was from the very beginning destined to become the proper heir of Hellas, and this world cannot deny that we have well preserved our heritage. Our kingdom is the noblest in the world, and so is the school of our art. We have all but surpassed the temples and sculptures of the times of Pericles and Phidias. There is one problem that waxes over our heads, though. It darkens our future and demands a fatalistic solution. What worries me, gentlemen, is the future.

Have you noticed the growing power beyond the seas? Have you informed yourselves of the barbaric power of Rome with stale traditions, a dark history,

bloody leaders and a decaying so called republican system? Have you discerned the nature of this growing abscess and asked yourselves my very question, how such a city of recklessness has come to be allowed by the gods such a tremendous expansion as to end up as the only hope of the world? Is it not astonishing that such a cancer already has engulfed half of the world?

You are well aware of the fact that I have no heir. Our glorious realm of Pergamum, which was founded by the great Eumenes, has nothing to live on except great memories of the past. She consists only of backwash from the ancient Greece. We have well administered our Hellenic inheritance without blame or fault, but we are today facing the situation that we no longer have any future for our own continuity. We have no able progeny to continue where we have to leave. We have to give our inheritance away to foreigners or outsiders or experience the tragedy of her languishing or perishing in civil wars, like the ancient kingdom of Israel. It is my duty as a responsible monarch to choose the least painful of all possible solutions, and therefore I have chosen to bequeath our throne to Rome as the only hope left remaining for the world today and as the only not too fatal solution to our political problem.

Please, don't be afraid, embittered or depressed. Unfortunately this is the only possible thing for me to do. I am only thinking of the welfare of Pergamum, and a less unhappy choice than this cannot be done, since every other possible solution must end worse. No one knows better than I that Pergamum will not be happy under the tyranny of Rome, but it cannot become less unhappy under the tyranny of anyone else. Our political situation is tragic, but mind you, so is the political situation of our entire world.

I beg to remind you that Pergamum under Rome in spite of all still is able to remain intact as Pergamum. The fact that you will be governed by Romans does not imply that you no longer will be autonomous. They will leave you in peace as a nation within their nation, and I am quite certain that the only thing you really will have lost when you become a Roman province is your last king of Pergamum.

Behold! The sun is descending over the sea. This twilight is not only the twilight of ourselves, but I fear it is the twilight of the entire Hellenic world. The future belongs to Rome, and unfortunately Hellas belongs to the past.

We, Pergamum, Rhodes and Alexandria are the last supporting pillars of ancient Greece. My testament can be interpreted as an effort to bequeath Pergamum under the protection of Rome by peaceful means so that it may in spite of all continue pursuing its own cultural life and destiny, and I pray to the gods that my effort may succeed. I also pray that Rhodes and Alexandria may avoid destruction when these fall under the jurisdiction of Rome, which alas! I regard as unavoidable. If Rome is to be the future universal monarchy, may it then rest on pillars of the past and not on ruins of the past. For what is any future without a solid ground consisting of qualified experience? May Museion in Alexandria never catch fire, nor the stately statues of Rhodes ever fall to the ground shaken by war and turbulence. Still I know that all of Hellas is doomed to all but total destruction. The only thing we can do

about it is to slow down development to almost nothing. If ruin must come we have to slow down history as much as possible in order to postpone doomsday as far as possible. May the hands of Zeus, Apollo and Poseidon protect everything of universal Hellenic value which still remains at least as long as they themselves still are acknowledged as gods governing our lives and destiny.

Rome is a dark, barbaric and rotten thing, but still my only political faith is in Rome. The order of Rome will unfortunately outlast the splendour of Greece.

Behold, the sun is down. I think that now the time has come for us to go down as well.



Augustus:

Alexandria is burning. What's that got to do with me? It's Antony's and Cleopatra's fault. Something has to be sacrificed for civilization, and I prefer to have them sacrificed with their city rather than perish myself. Besides, I am more qualified to do anything for the future than they are.

But is the future worth doing anything for? The best of history is always the past. But I have my duties. The world will thank me forever if I secure civilization no matter how rotten it actually is.

I will do my very best though to render my age classical. I shall introduce Apollo to Rome, the coarse brick town shall be replaced by shining temples and palaces of

marble, and in every way I will transform the vanity of nothing into something worth while. For though I am not the right qualified person to turn Rome into a new Athens, I am, like every Roman, at least clever enough to be able to produce a popularly acceptable copy.

Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar are my paragon predecessors. It shall be my sincere delight to follow them up and surpass them. For even if their greatness as war leaders is unattainable for my peaceful simplicity, I shall be able to outshine them simply by consummating my constructive placidity, since all their imposing purposes of power came to nothing. This is the tragedy of true greatness: it never succeeds in establishing its actual greatness.

My simply practical ideas are naturally not as forceful and imposing as theirs once were, but by using their ideological examples in carrying through my own personal universally constructive schemes, I might in my own personal way end up the most acclaimed man in history.



Romans! Ye are favoured! You are living in the finest city in the world at the head of the finest empire of history, and consequently you must be the finest people that Jove ever placed on earth. You constitute a broad world aristocracy, and as that you should remain with pride forever. Adopt the following doctrines: Rome is the best, we are the best, and everything else is nothing. If you only maintain your Roman ancient virtues you will certainly with this glorious city of Rome prosper in limitless continuity. The future will know us as the eternal people of the eternal city.

Behold this blessed city that I have given you! I received a town of brick and clay, and now it beams of marble stateliness. Maintain this architectural wonder of the ages, keep it free from the historical dust of defeat, for a finer and lovelier city has never existed and will never exist. And remember me as the initiator of her established world leadership of virtue and grace.

Rome is flourishing. Peace is the ruler of every bay of the Mediterranean, the whole civilization is one unity, everything breathes prosperity and progress, order is established throughout the world, and I am myself quite satisfied with my own family life. What then is missing? What did I do wrong? How did this terrible boredom occur which now is so dominating everywhere?

Ovid, you cursed corruptor, begone! Only such as you imperil my empire, because by locating its moral weakness and making it worse by wallowing in it you turn it into a cancer that threatens to swallow everything up. I can't tolerate being thus made a fool of.

Is humanity so weak and poor spiritually, that when at last freedom from violence and starvation is attained, they begin instead to suffer even more from boredom? Is life so cruelly vain, that when you finally accomplish the realization of all your life's purposes, the result strikes you as detestable?

Tiberius, thou depraved sot of impotency, is Rome then doomed to fall into your hands? Must this sedition which is spreading everywhere proceed from bad to worse, must these bored and lazy fattened Romans sink to even lower depths of dullness, does this vicious circle of moral stagnation have to develop into a dwindling spiral of decay? In that case life is only hopelessness. Look at these Romans! They wallow in filth, they compete in degeneration, flesh is law and lack of taste is king of culture, the only relief from boredom is eating and drinking in ever-increasing excess, and this universal anti-climax of the consummation of civil order is all what I have worked and lived for. This established barbarity is the only consequence of the divine desirable and long sought for Pax Romana, the crown of human endeavour, that humanity after so many hard civil wars finally came into possession of. The strenuously strived for paradise has turned out to be a masked trap into hell. Fat-arses, dough-corpses, watery flesh and stinking whoredom, that's the end result of Roman civilization. My only solace is at least a clean conscience. I did what I could to secure culture, civilization and society.

Once I had two grandchildren. Both were very promising and talented, but they were both killed. My own wedded wife I can no longer trust. My daughter is a whore like her daughter. My people are bored to death and thoroughly rotting away. And my life's work, this united universal monarchy, I am compelled to leave into the hands of a corrupted dog called Tiberius, who will certainly allow it to drop into a

quagmire of gladiator terrorism. What then has been my life's worth? Worse than nothing, since I have not been able to love anyone or anything without having been bereft of that love by the subtle violence of destiny.

Marcus Aurelius:

What kind of a world is this? How fain would I not leave it instantly, if I were not unhappily endowed with its supreme responsibility.

Why was I made an emperor? What is my business here in this alien reality which no sensible man can be anything but appalled by? Only the gods know. I assume that I would not be here in this place if there was no meaning of chance or providence in my being burdened by this total responsibility.

I simply have to adapt myself to the situation. The only possibility to get away with an acceptable life is to after all accept life as it is. Since I have the misfortune to happen to be the emperor, I just have to either rise or lower myself to this role of being the emperor.

Providence has placed me in charge of this world empire. What is the meaning of this universal monarchy? It is indeed great, glorious and mighty in its established traditions, but what can save it from the doom of all other preceding great empires of history? Decline, fall and oblivion have been the fate of every single empire that ever constituted a glorious world order. Why then am I deigning to this task of being the leader of an artificial empire which anyway must crumble into pieces sooner or later? Because it is a worldly duty which has been trusted with me. Since providence entrusted me with this task, I have to carry it through no matter where it leads and whether I myself have faith in it or not. The degree of vanity in this mortal task is thereby of no consequence.

Whatever is the meaning of life? Why do I live when I have to die? Why do world cultures and empires rise when they have to succumb to perdition anyway? Why is the supreme ideal of stability – unalterableness – such a forbidden impossibility?

Logically, living is totally without meaning since you have to die. Vespasian's life was without meaning, so was Augustus', Alexander of Macedonia conquered the world most vainly, and even the dazzling light of Hellenic culture was meaningless, since everything from the very beginning is always doomed to death and oblivion. All is mere dying vanity, therefore everything is meaningless, for what is the meaning of any constructiveness when there is no construction without destruction?

Even my life and work is of the same emptiness as that of the pious Antonine, the greatest of all our emperors, for who will recall us after a few centuries? Who remembers Antonine today? Almost no one speaks of him any more, and if a few still are cherishing his memory today, he will certainly be forgotten by tomorrow when these are dead, and then follows the forgetfulness of history. As living creatures we are all as meaningless, vain and without consequence as the poorest beggars of Rome.



Glorious Rome, I defend thee only because this is the right and correct thing to do. I perform this duty without motivation or will, since I have no will of my own, since life is nothing to me, being from the beginning without meaning. I desire nothing, for desiring anything is the ultimate vanity since all there is must perish, and consequently I, my children and Rome are as vain, valueless and without meaning as ever Hellas, Babylon, Alexander, the Assyrians and the library of Alexandria were.

Vanity is the tragedy of all the great constructors of history and civilization, for whatever they accomplish in raising immediately comes rolling down again as inevitably as the hopeless stone of Sisyphus.

A monk of Ireland:

The world is dissolved, and the future looks darker than night. Huns and vandals ravage throughout the once so civilized Europa, and the only visible light anywhere seems to me to be that of my religion Christianity.

Sitting in a dark cell in this draughty monastery, I spend my days studying and writing while I bewail the fate of this material world. Only in this our distant Ireland I believe there are people who do not constantly fight and behead each other as much as possible, beside the far away Constantinople, which I never tire of dreaming of once getting the opportunity to experience. For Constantinople has now become what Rome used to be, namely the heart of culture and civilization.

But a sad story it was that the power and organization of Rome was so utterly annihilated. Imagine if Christianity had vanquished a united peaceful world instead of this total chaos! Then Rome would have been thrice as large, stately and

honourable today as it ever was in olden days. If the order of Rome had remained, it would not only have been the capital of the world still but even the capital of God.

But unfortunately it all went to pieces, and its definite downfall has resulted in a world as dark, chaotic and exhausted that my only remaining hope and faith is in God and St. Augustine. God is the only hope of salvation and peace for humanity, and only through God's house the Christian church is this hope attainable. That is why I live only for the order, construction and progress of this church. My highest wish in life is to be able to go to Mercia as an apostle before I am too old and thus in the best possible way contribute to the unification of Ireland and Britain under the supremacy of the holy church.

How wonderful is this blessed realm of my Ireland! My father taught me faithfulness in Irish nature, he knew personally St. Patrick, which I never tired of hearing him tell stories about when I was a child. He also used to tell me and my brothers about our mother, whom he always delicately described as the most virtuous virgin that ever graced our green island by her tender footsteps. I ever tried to picture her consummate being in my mind without quite succeeding.

As a young man I also helped in the business of furnishing harps and other instruments of music, which travellers from the south in the service of the church always were impressed by and praised in words that surprised me. They used to say that they never anywhere in the world had seen or heard more beautiful instruments or finer music than that which our instruments produced, and yet they had travelled wide and far from Kiev to Seville and in most countries in between.

I am now past the age when you still are pleased with your youth and the beauty of life in general, and the rest of my life is entirely given up to God. This is as far as you can get in life today: a higher service than that of the supreme being directly is not possible, because God is not only the highest of all things; he is also the most enjoyable and beautiful of all imaginable reasons for life.

Our world in its chaos and barbarity is in such a dejected state of turmoil that it can hardly become worse. I am therefore privileged who have grown up within the church and become ordained in her service, since only the church offers hope for the future. The church is an isolated well in a desert without which there is naught but languishing and torment.

And as long as the church remains intact and pure in its rule by gentle god-fearing men, faith will remain with humanity for a better future in spite of all. And therefore I pray to God to preserve his blessed church.

A Byzantine chronicler:

My name is Constantine Almeios. I was born during the very year that our great John Komnenos chose for his departure, and the emperor Manuel was a personal friend of mine as long as he lived. On my wayward journeys I have seen the greater part of our world, and especially dear to my remembrance are places like our

fragrant daughter Venice, the flourishing Genoa, the calm wilderness of Cyprus, the heartrending ruins of decaying Athens, the pious remoteness of Kiev, the pompous glory of Rome and the lost shrines of Alexandria. Few tragedies were as painful as the fall of Alexandria, and unfortunately I cannot close my eyes to the glaring parallels between the development of Alexandria and that of Constantinople. During the greater part of my life I was the good emperor Manuel's most trusted diplomat, and before that I used to be commander-in-chief among other things. As my life now inevitably is waning away into a melancholy sunset I am passing my old age alone in my villa on the coast of Mysia, since I can't find myself at home any more in Constantinople. My only company is my memories, so full of people long since dead, my wife and children among others. The last energies of my life I try to channel into some constructive task like writing chronicles and have even succeeded in finishing off the testimony of my experience. With all this solidly and carefully done I now bend my blow-burdened back over my writing-desk to torture my eyes in finally committing myself to summon up the end result of all my love.

Of all the wonderful things in life, apart from the wonderfulness of life itself, I always gave my warmest love with all my heart to my native town of Constantinople. Why then did I desert this city if I ever loved it so tenderly? It was neither boredom, discomfort or detestation that caused my withdrawal, and neither did I nourish any particular desire to end my life in isolation. No, the only reason for my abandoning Constantinople was, that I could not bear standing by witnessing the fatal course of my imperial town. I could not endure watching her gradually advancing downfall. The imperial throne is no longer any seat for emperors, for nowadays only cheap idiots, egoists, tyrants, fools and nincompoops turn it upside down by their acrobatics of intrigue. And while these are impetuously degenerating, the countries of the western world are steadily prospering both culturally and economically. They are gradually overtaking us with their bankers and trading, and like young impatient ignorant youths they arm themselves with envy and hate against their grandsire Byzantium. And at the same time we have the inflamed fury of the Mahometans in the south ever aggressively closing in upon us, ever burning our crops, destroying our cities, slaughtering our people and ever cultivating their cruelty and fanaticism for no purpose at all except death. It is a fatal cancer in the body of our Byzantine state which every year spreads her dreadful destruction in our limbs to steadily approach our heart Constantinople. And this our people, my beloved Greek Christian people, are starving both from material insufficiencies and lack of spiritual health and growth. Every time a newly crowned glorious emperor excels all his carefully and bloodily deposed predecessors in cruelty, incompetence and treason, all their hopes for the future are buried alive after barely having survived the last monarch's failures and forfeitures. Because of this so called development even Venice, our most faithful and loved daughter, has alienated herself from us, joined our enemies and even conspired against us. Recently we heard from our spies in Genoa that the Europeans are planning their next mortal crusade not against the Arabs but against us, in order to make us Latins and an

obedient province and humble suburb to Europe. Few of us will believe this, but unfortunately I know that this rumour speaks the truth. As a consequence of this regrettable, tragic, unbearably painful and dismally catastrophic backward development I have chosen to leave my Constantinople. As an old warrior I know well that the worst way to die is slowly, and worse than dying slowly by yourself is to watch others die slowly. I will rather tear out my beloved Constantinople from my heart at once than witness personally how she slowly is rotting and consuming herself from the inside in unbearable interminable unfathomable agony constantly accelerating unto the cataclysm of eternal death.

The figures of our ancient history that are most dear to me to think of occasionally are naturally first of all the father of our city Constantine the Great himself, secondly the magnificent Justinian, of course the sympathetic and emphatic Heraclius, the glorious and steadfast Leo the Isaurian and the three unsurpassable Komnenians Alexios, John and Manuel, during the era of which our country experienced her last age of greatness and happiness. Another man whose humbler memory I worship is the honest general Belisarius, who in spite of all his generous contributions died without a salary. There are also several honourable queens who are more loved by me today than they were by their husbands while they lived, for instance the impeccable Theodora, wife of Justinian, and our most royal and noble queen ever – the worthy spouse of John Komnenos, the adorable queen Irene.

Next to Constantinople the city I am most fond of is our unfaithful daughter Venice, who is still young and fresh and vital. Unlike us she has most probably a glorious future to face, and I grant her that prosperity with all my heart. May even the only true Queen of the Mediterranean encounter even finer ages than were our best. I shall never forget the stupendous overwhelming beauty and overpowering vitality and efficiency that she impressed me so deeply with when as a young man for the first time I entered her enchanted harbour. It is not altogether improbable that she even one day might rise as the Queen of all the seas and trades in the world, and why not even as the newborn Athens of a new enlightened age?

There is of course much in the world that is deplorable, tragical and evil. But of all unnecessary things evil I find the most tragic of all to be the common ignorance, superficiality and lack of common sense which is evident in mankind's forgetfulness of the past. I am generally considered to be one of the most learned men of our nation, but with all this unfathomable knowledge which is supposed to be mine I know almost nothing about for instance ancient Athens or Babylon, because adequate information of these civilizations in their prime is nowhere to be found. This world has not cared about preserving the highlights of history, and instead mankind has ruined and plundered all that was left of these remarkable capitals after their chief downfall by the hands of stupidity, barbarity and ignorance. Responsible leaders of history have lost the most beautiful, precious, divine and irretrievable treasures and memories of mankind, for which I have sometimes felt tempted to curse all humanity forever, since I can't regard man's voluntary ignorance of his own history as anything less than a crime against humanity. All I have managed to find

out for certain about Babylon after 50 years of research is that it was the cradle of history, science and philosophy. Concerning Athens I am a little better informed, because the ruins are still there bearing witness of the fact that its beauty and glory never has been surpassed. Athens is not yet buried alive by nature and forgotten by civilization like Babylon, and yet, the little I know about these unsurpassable chapters of the past is too little to be able to support any firm scientific knowledge. The ruins are enough to allow speculations galore but never any full and stable certainty. I know in my heart that their glory was true and unsurpassed, but that profound personal conviction is not enough to refute future authorities which for lack of evidence will deny that Athens and Babylon ever were of any consequence. Like Babylon was destroyed a number of times, so maybe one day Constantinople will be overtaken by the fanatical Mahometans who then will do their best to destroy all its Christian history and deny that it ever existed, being so self-destructively prone to voluntary denial, neglect and ignorance of history.

Finally I would like to mention the Germans. The gothic Roman Empire which they during a relatively short period have constructed with might and energy on the ruins of wrecked Rome I must admit that more resemble a true lasting Roman Empire than ours ever did. I believe the future belongs to them. I acknowledge their competence and practical fitness and dare burden them with much historical trust and faith. If they really will be a guiding star to Europe on the road to better future ages of greatness and enlightenment, then I earnestly wish with all my soul that they with the power of God as an instrument will lead what's left of our civilization forward instead of where Rome ended up with all the power in the world, in a backward abyss of total derangement. I pray to God for His protection of them as their guide. May a distant glorious future sometime be graced by enlightened men of endowment on the throne of a worthy and stable universal monarchy, because I believe that to be the chief effort of all historical effort, no matter how constantly that endeavour ever has failed in the past. And with all my heart I add to these pious requests also the prayer that mankind one day will be redeemed from the base necessity of meaningless violence.

Superfluous but necessary to subjoin is the obviousness, that my sincerest and highest love is for God alone. Like all thinking mortal beings I have at times found it difficult to take his existence for absolutely granted without objections, it is impossible in this world of perpetual strife not to feel deserted even by Him occasionally, but if I all too often have made myself worthy of that fire which is reserved for heretics, I will never flinch one instant in my constant love of the idea of God as a human thought. For to be able to think in such a manner proves in my opinion that there is at least something divine in the human being. Whether God exists, what He looks like, whether he is personal, whether He created the universe or not, all such queries are thereby of no consequence. It is quite enough that man at least in rare moments is capable of thinking divinely of God as something of a supreme ideal.

And with that final expression of my love I close the brief chapter of my long life.

A Venetian painter:

No, this can't go on any longer! I must make up my mind! Am I to be a professional painter or merely a professional lover? I can't practise both professions at the same time no matter how much in love I am with both of them!

Alas, Maria Leonora, why did you have to enter my life? If it hadn't been for you, my Ascension of Christ would now be finished and my reputation established from Florence to Vienna! I would have gained victory in the great competition between as yet unknown professional artists, and I might have been summoned to Rome! But nothing came of it. Instead you enticed me to your bed, you spoiled me with your wines and grapes, and you caressed me out of time, while my time kept running out. You did everything for me while I did nothing, and now I'll have to wait another year before I get another chance to recognition.

And now I've lost you on top of all! You have eloped with that most enviable Giorgione, while I am left behind with all the losses in the world.

But this evening I'll drown my sorrows at the party in the Grand Duke Gonzaga's palace, the fellow who loves art more than all his money. He is a true patron and Maecenas of the rarest and most honourable kind.

Wine! Bring me some wine! Let me start already, so that I will be cheerful and in great spirits even before the party begins and even before I disembark from the gondola. But I must at the same time beware of getting so drunk that I risk falling into the canal, which happened last time.



Titian, are you here already? How wonderful to see the most worthy of all my worthy colleagues! Is Giorgione here also? He isn't? I've heard a rumour about your not being friends any more. What on earth has happened?

Paolo Veronese, here I am, your own Francesco! How are things going in your workshop? In mine everything is going to blazes. I keep falling in love, and I am constantly dragged away from my work before I have had time to commence it

properly! It is terrible! I came here tonight only to get a perfect opportunity for drowning all my sorrows completely!

What sorrows, do you ask? Maria Leonora, that gorgeous woman, has left me! How dare you laugh? Take this shower in your face of my delicious wine, and that will teach you how to laugh!

Attention for what? What is your message? Aha! The duke is coming.

A most wonderful dinner, your excellency! I did never eat anything more perfect under the palace roofs of anyone, and I have never enjoyed myself so much before as I have done tonight with you and all your splendid company of guests. I thank you, your excellency, my work is proceeding well. And if your honour wishes to have your entire family immortalized on canvas in the most beautiful colours suited to your family's high deserts, I will be at your service at any time! Thank you, your excellency!

What did he say to you, that liberal old fox?

He promised to visit me in my workshop one day in order to, as he put it, contemplate the excellent works of a most promising young man! I have seldom been so flattered before.

He keeps saying that to everyone.

I don't believe it unless you prove it! But come with me! Let' see what other guests we have here tonight gracing this company and palace by their presence!

What do you think of Tintoretto?

A goofing dilettante.

Don't you say so. He has much experience already, and he has many years of work ahead.

He will never succeed in doing anything proper even if he tried.

Ha-ha! You'll never change!

But what do you think of Correggio?

I know too little of him. I haven't seen any of his pictures yet.

You must discover him before you die! You simply must!

Take it easy! Is he that magnificent?

He is a greater artist than Raphael!

Hush! Not so loud! You must not blaspheme like that.

But it's true!

No one is greater than Raphael, not even I.

Michelangelo is greater than Raphael.

Michelangelo maybe, but no one else.

Leonardo is greater than Raphael.

Leonardo is a pervert, and in addition to his deviation he has abandoned art for science, which is unpardonable.

But he is a greater artist than Raphael.

I leave that for posterity to decide.

But tell me: is it true that the emperor Charles of Hapsburg admires you?

He admires us all. He would even admire you if he knew about your existence.
Is it true that he once picked up a pencil for you?
Absolutely.

Giorgio, what do you think of the future?
I think the world will go to hell. At least I am going to hell.
A man who is in love with life does never go to hell. And you're in love with life.
But is the world a lover of life? Just look at it!

Isn't it a wonderful age we are living in?
Yes, I wish it would go on forever.
Raphael is hoping to become a cardinal.
If he will become pope, then we'll really see some world miracles.
I think his ambitions are in that direction. The church needs cleaning up.
It sure does. And creative artists are the only proper ones to do it.

Have you heard the latest news?
No?
Giorgione and Titian have been quarrelling.
I don't believe it.
Titian painted a finer canvas than Giorgio, and Giorgio couldn't bear it and
accused him of copying. They have separated now. They will never work together
again.
How terrible!

Francesco, you were dead drunk yesterday. What's the matter?
I mourn Giorgione.
Still?
Yes.
But he has been dead already for two months!
Don't you think I know? Does that perhaps make him more alive?

What kind of madmen are these Germans? First they bring these so called perfect
artists Cranach and Durer without life, and now they bring on this Martin Luther
who brings war! What do they really want? Is it not enough with their debasing art?
Do they have to dissolve the church and Christendom as well?

What kind of a world is this? Has everyone now turned into raving maniacs for
religious trifles? Has Christendom now sunk so deep in violent barbarity that
Christians fight and murder Christians for the sake of Christianity?

Have you seen Titian today?
No. Where is he?

They say he is confined at home in grief.
In grief? For what?
Haven't you heard the terrible news?
No.
Raphael is dead.

What will the future call this age? It was our ambition to bring forth a new antiquity with classicism. We have failed already. Will it be called the New Antiquity anyway? I hardly think so. To name it so would merely be a bad distasteful joke.

But all the same we made an effort which did carry some success. Art is made alive again, although we never reached the blinding light of ancient Greece and that consummate splendour of civilization. The question is: can that supreme ideal of culture ever be attained again, or is it lost forever?

I have fallen in love again, this time with Maria Buona. If she leaves me tomorrow I will commit suicide for certain, and that I promise!

But until she leaves me, whenever that baleful day will occur, how ardently will I not love her! My love for her will be of such a kind that she will never be able to forget it, for I am much more in love with her than in anyone before!

Come what may, I live today, and I will surely love all day, for nothing else has anything to say.

Goethe:

Life is the worst of torments. If you can suffer it, and you must suffer it, you will be able to suffer anything, and you will have to suffer everything.

They call me an Olympian. But what's the use of my being an Olympian?

You live only in order to expand as a person and develop a personal self. Who doesn't live for himself is a fool.

How do you express your love of humanity when humanity is not capable of understanding it?

I am perhaps the loneliest of men, for I understand the world while the world has no understanding of me. This is the tragedy of every individual.

Am I trying to live up to ideals that don't exist? Am I living in the illusion that the world really is such an exquisite illusion which I believe it to be? Am I then only one of the great fools of history?



The French revolution is the greatest tragedy in history: the plebeians no longer respect the patricians, wherefore they degrade them to plebeians. But what is a state of only plebeians if not something of a mere anthill?

A state must be ruled by aristocrats, because if the aristocrats are overthrown they will be replaced by common people, who usually fail in living up to the level of their aristocratic predecessors, wherefore they are overthrown in their turn. The

overthrow of traditional aristocratic world order must lead into a vicious circle of failures which cannot be interrupted except by total chaos and ruin.

I can but admire this genius Jean-Jacques Rousseau for conceiving this most brilliant idea of the necessity of returning to nature. But I am afraid God has enriched the world with his person and idea too late, since industrialism and materialism already are established,

The tragic fate of this musician from Vienna called Schubert is a terrible example of the life-threatening situation of the world: it is no longer able to esteem the value of the only supremely priceless thing in life, namely the purely creative platonic love of beauty, which phenomenon the life and work of Schubert is something of a most unique personification of.

If I were able to choose anyone I wanted for a wife for eternity, I would choose the empress Catherine the Great of Russia.

Beethoven was almost naïvely in love with England, and I think I understand him, for this England has in truth a certain quality of noble refinement which never before has been seen in history apart from the sole exception of ancient Greece.

Russia is a massive colossus stalking heavily into the centre of the theatrical world scene of history. I believe the future to rest in the hands of Russia and Britain, for Germany is as split as a patchwork quilt.

So Napoleon has finally come to his senses and passed away. It cannot be denied, though, that he made a rather conspicuous career as the most entertaining clown of our age.

Death comes to all and no less to me than to everyman. I am glad though that I now shall be liberated from the sight of the world's gradual deterioration while the Holy Alliance still is functioning and feeding people with positive illusions, for who knows when even that political perfection will collapse like all things else in history?

For what is history if not the story of how everything eternally has been but miserable turnings?

Bismarck:

Of course I am vain, but so is every human being. My game is to unite this Germany, for who can be a German and contentedly watch Russia, France and England conquer all the world alone?

But how is Germany to be united? I have tried diplomacy and Austrian co-operation but have failed in all respects. Peace does not work in our time. In order to get something done you have to dare to risk wars, let blood and strike with iron.

Forward, Germans, and let nothing stand between yourselves and the unification of all German states, so that our fatherland as soon as possible may throw itself again right in the middle of world history where it belongs!

Old Austria, what are you good for? You're an old stagnated buffer who no longer even cares to stumble forward on your crippled legs in order to acquire the last and smallest possible colonies. Gladly I'll abandon you as soon as it suits me, but as long as you support me and all Germany and follow us you are my friend and fellow soldier. And I'll be hanged if you are not the only honourable nation in Europe.

This most refreshing war with Napoleon the Little has finally taught France her correct position on the map: as a dog outside the home of continental Germany in her proper kennel waiting to serve her masters.

Today I have crowned an emperor whom I have placed at the head of the finally successfully united Germany, and I thank God for at last having granted us the attainment of our goal. Now our most important business will simply be to keep Germany on her proper felicitous course.

Frederick Barbarossa, you constitute our paragon example. Without your imposing medieval will, I would not have pushed this hasty troublesome work to finally resulting extremes. Three wars were a great price for our unity, but now our winnings will only be saved through peace.

Europe is reaching her height of affluence, for all nations are heartily competing with each other. England is eager to preserve her brilliant superiority, I fight to make Germany at least her equal, while Russia and France are joining hands to make themselves worthy of a competition with our sea and continental nations. There has never been written a more exciting chapter in history, for never before have the stakes of the political game been so high: the whole world is now at stake.

Who is that damned magnificent builder of empires called Cecil Rhodes? Why in earth's name is he not a German or at least a Boer?

I have lost my emperor today. A young unpolished overacting whipper-snapper whom I cannot bear intends to be his unworthy successor, and there is nothing I can do, however clearly I discern dark gatherings on the horizon of the future.

Germany has lost her chancellor today. The emperor of total immaturity has simply in his reckless rashness dismissed me from my sacred duties to my nation. Consequently I fear greatly for the destiny of Germany.



That hobbledehoy of a pickle who disfigures the royal throne of Germany is constantly ruining all his chances by his presumptuous unseriousness. Never did Germany better deserve a perfect monarch, and never was Germany led astray by a worse one.

I hate to leave the world in this so fateful moment, but death is something we all are obliged to accept. I pray to God that all those threatening and dire clouds of holocaust may be dispersed in time, and that this blessed Germany may be preserved as it is now, and also this entire happy world and civilization at the level they have reached in this our glorious nineteenth century.

An unknown soldier:

What a wonderful world! Am I not privileged to live in this sparkling moment of a universal joy and progress! Who is happier than I to have this perfect education in this splendid realm of a most prominent and perfectly outstanding British Empire? I fly like a swallow energetically trying for the first time these miraculously fashioned expert wings of education up towards the bluest and clearest sky with pleasure bathing in the sunlight of the universal admiration of my friends and generation!

So many things happen each day in this so constantly expanding world, and I enjoy my democratic freedom to partake in everything and notify myself of all important information. This gives me a feeling as of owning personally the entire world. I travel easily all over Europe without passport, and I learn what can be learned with ease in every open country. This has sharpened my life's purpose, which is positively to spend all my labour, power and qualifications to contribute to the building of a perfect world and a united Europe.

The most sympathetic Russians are on my side, constituting a most wonderful and humanistic people lacking only education. I consider it a pity though, that the most cultivated gentlemanly Czar was far too weak in his defence against Japan, which made each Russian battle something of a perfect awkwardness.

The German emperor is also most constructive. Although he is bragging like an insolent impostor it is clear that he wants nothing else than perfect peace.

The admirable Austria unfortunately suffers from a rather too aggressive minister of foreign affairs whom I would gladly have removed from every field of danger in Europe. Vienna is a capital of music above all, and such a capital is much more than politically capital.

The case of France is rather difficult to deal with, it's a wild undisciplined capricious nation, but with all the trouble everyone had with Napoleon, and that includes the French, I do believe that they will nevermore do any mischief of any serious dimensions.

Italy is nothing to take seriously. Her people have a natural spontaneous joy of living which all other nations ought to envy them, but that enviable resplendent quality is just what makes them quite impossible and harmless in politics.

Finally we have to reckon with America, that most ridiculous megalomaniac without culture on the back side of the world. Such a clown of nonsense and absurdity as that preposterous republic is, I think it is best disregarded.

Such is this most interesting scene where we shall witness the most fascinating play of plays which we ourselves are actors in: the play of history in this our very present moment, in which all the actors are themselves construing it. The only danger, as I see it, is apparently that this our play is gradually taken more and more too seriously.

How wonderful is not this England! I belong to Cambridge, there is nothing in the world that possibly could separate me from my lovely London, and I will not ever feel at home in any other blessed place. I wander through the streets, I follow every argument in Parliament, and everywhere I find my friends and other youths and colleagues just as eager as myself with beaming eyes alertly shining with the enthusiastic spirit of progressive action probably just like mine own. We certainly are living in a golden age.

But one thing troubles me: why have the world's most valuable people during the last century grown so unhappy? Why did Lautrec drink himself to death, why did van Gogh commit suicide, what happened to Seurat, Musorgsky, Schumann, Hugo Wolf and Nietzsche, and why did great men like Schopenhauer, Brahms, Tolstoy and Strindberg end up so embittered pessimistic misanthropes? I fail to understand the total decay of the leading spirits of our age.

This terrible tragedy that everyone is crying loud about today is really a most overwhelming and portentous sign. Imagine, that the safest, proudest, greatest, most magnificent and most admired ship on her first trip across the sea most

ignominiously is lost! I find it terrifyingly incomprehensible. Is science and her winnings then no longer to be trusted? This catastrophe, which rightly could be called the foundering of universal human pride, has quite upset me and all but bereft me of my ground to stand on. Like one of the most portentous omens in all human history, the name "Titanic" will forever be remembered with the utmost apprehension, fear and awe.

What a dreadful tragedy! And why did it so mercilessly have to strike the venerable Austria and that old monarch Francis Joseph, who is carrying heavier loads of grief and sorrow than perhaps all other men on earth! I am thinking of the shots in Sarajevo.

And what will this series of events amount to? The responsibility for humankind, the world and our universal fate now rests with one sole man, the minister of foreign affairs of Austria, who is the only man in European politics whom I could never trust.

Oh no! Alas! Alack, and woe is me! I tremble in the very depths of my heart and soul! My world is burning! The consummate paradise of wonderfulness which was real still yesterday has turned now into flaming hell and hopeless self-destruction in which everyone is enemy to everyone, in which all human values are completely lost and in which life itself has suddenly become a worthless matter to be sacrificed for nothing. Everything is ruined by the hard cold facts of this world war. If Disraeli, Gladstone or Sir Cecil Rhodes had been alive today they would like me be weeping for the loss of all the world.

I pray with all my heart to God that this insanity at least will not possess the world and humankind for very long.

I am stationed at the front. People are dying out here like flies. The procedure of war is something like everybody being busy about killing everybody. For in the mists of the front it is difficult to separate friends from enemies, and our weapons are so efficient that they kill everyone and everything without exception. Everyone here is quite aware of that this reality is hell.

I am lying at a hospital, I don't even know where. People are bleeding, screaming, operated on and dying day and night. The majority is invalidated for good, and even I, for my right arm beneath the elbow is left behind me on the battle-field.

I am back in the trenches. I am shooting at people, but I don't care if I make hits or not. I obey the orders I am given but only like a machine, which is operated by levers and buttons. I no longer have any conscience nor any trace of a free will. Naturally I long for death. What else is there for a soldier to dream of? But fate is ironical enough to insist on keeping me alive.

Things are also going well for my former colleague and lasting friend in Parliament, the former minister Mr. Churchill, and his cabinet friends who rule the world and never saw a modern battle. That's how they ended up with Gallipoli.

I am back at the hospital. Both my legs have been amputated. Obviously I have paid for not being obliged to return to the front.

I remember that I once upon a time loved a world. Where is that world now?

America has joined in the war, and the allies are now winning. Of course you needed help from a vulgar clown in order to win this torpid war.

The war is over. My family, being rich, allows me to travel around Europe. There are only ruins left of all the former splendid Christian empires, and I have found nothing but increasing tragedy, barbarity and bitterness. The old highly cultivated Russia is closed to everyone, and no one knows what's going on in there anymore. The German socialists appear to be the only Germans who keep marching on. They are too mad to realize the fact that there is no Europe any more for them to haunt.

England only is still alive in its own identity. When I return there it will be to stay at home for the rest of my life, because the world which has been lost to me and to humanity can only be rediscovered in the dreams of that nation which has lost the world most of all.

Passing through Switzerland I visited the great Nijinsky, whom I had the pleasure of seeing at Covent Garden before the war. Nowadays he happens to be quite mad. Our meeting was extremely painful, for I was not informed of the facts of his illness until I reached him.

It doesn't appear on the surface, but in spite of appearances even England is totally exhausted as a nation not just economically but also from the aspect that almost an entire generation is turned to invalids or lost.

My nephews don't like me because I am so dumb and sullen. They like to watch me, though, when I move the short stumps of my legs. They think it looks funny. It amuses me to be of any pleasure to the world even if the world no longer is of any pleasure to me.

America actually seems to be the only hope for the world nowadays. It's incredible that this rude and vulgar country inhabited by only stupid uneducated wild and shouting fools and clowns now is the world's leading nation.

It is now my intention to commit suicide, because this existence is altogether meaningless.



Czar Nicholas II:

My lawful wedded wife is hated by my people only because her blood is German. My son Alexei suffers from the most severe and incurable of royal illnesses haemophilia, the haunting terror of the mother of the world Queen Victoria. My palace is severely haunted by a demon called Rasputin, whose evil influence steadily increases. They say his influence is good, but he's a sexual maniac, and influence by sexuality is never good in political matters, and his political influence is massive. Myself I keep on living only in order to drown all my political failures by even greater political failures. I am not the right man to be supremely accountable of Russia, being a European gentleman educated in England, because the problems of Russia are too severe for me. I cannot cope with poverty, bureaucracy, starvation, ignorance and miserable slums galore, and the great question is whether anyone is able to cope with this ever increasing hopelessness. Being a realist I doubt it. The reality of Russia is that everything always can be even worse but never any better.

On top of everything my vast empire has just been dragged into a bloody European war between all nations which appears to never end, and after one year of war it only seems to bring about the total devastation of all the empires and nations involved, especially the monarchies. No one of us monarchs likes the war, no royal person wanted it, but all the same someone started it, and no one special is responsible. The Serbians blame the Austrians, the Austrians blame the Russians, we Russians blame the Germans, and the Germans blame England and France. Only Italy blames no one but fights it out with us anyway. Why this immense world tragedy of civilization?

On top of all my troubles, nihilists and anarchists, communists and bolsheviks and other criminal elements do their utmost to destroy all Russia from the inside like a mortal cancer, and if this war will continue another year or so, which is the wish of all those servants of chaos, I fear my Russia will collapse entirely.

I envy every human being in the world for the sole reason that he doesn't have to be the Czar.

Rasputin, what exactly do you want? Is it not enough for you and your possessed equals that the whole population of Russia is starving, rotting, suffering and perishing in corruption? Does even my own family have to be torn asunder in their spirit by the dark and evil spell of this Siberian peasant's secret power and strange behaviour? My own beloved wife, what is it that has tempted you to enter such an antisocial way of dangerous black magic? Am I such a weak support to you and to my family that this mad drunken farmer from the forest depths of Siberia supplies you with a better ground?

Long have I waited for this day. How I have longed for this relief and liberation from the most inhuman burden of my duties! My own people has now shown me mercy and relieved me of the yoke of all the national responsibility, and from the bottom of my heart I wish the good Kerensky all the best and heartily good luck. I wish though that I also soon will be relieved of this encumbrance of still being constantly obliged to keep up the appearance of being Czar although my power is bereft me, and perhaps my wish one day will gracefully be granted by my God and by my faithful people.

My son, my wife, my daughters, maybe that we finally now will be able to commence our veritable life as the most loving and harmonious family we really are.

I can't agree with this development. Kerensky is now even weaker and less competent than I myself once used to be. I am compelled, no matter how much I dislike it, to at any cost resume my former duties now, or else the fate of Russia will be total cataclysm.

If it is necessary I am now prepared to sacrifice my freedom, life, my safety and my family for just the salvation of Russia and her future.

Everything is lost. Kerensky overthrew his czar and government, and now this so called Lenin overthrows Kerensky and his democratic order. There is nothing to be done except to mourn and cry for the lost glory of our holy Russia and to wait for the inevitable end of this atrocious tragedy.

I have ceased to communicate with my family and to worry about them, for if I share their sufferings and total humiliation, I will most certainly end up insane.

Russia has during one single year been altered into a kakistocracy, and in Europe the war is still harrowing all Europe and will probably continue to do so no one knows for how long. I feel sorry for the Germans, the French and the British, because they have no idea as yet of what will come. War is just a springtime sowing; what the

autumn harvest will amount to as a logical result from years of war, and which all men must reap, is infinitely worse than any eager soldier or aggressive politician could imagine.

And I curse the day on which I gave the fatal order of mobilization, and that curse includes forever all those people who were mad enough to make me start that war!

My son is dying from the brutal treatment of the Bolshevik dictator Lenin's ignorant barbaric soldiers. Why cannot these men, who only know how to humiliate their betters, kill us all at once, since they all will do that anyway one day?

When I was young this boundless Russia was the greatest and the richest country in the world both culturally and concerning wealth and future. There was no political horizon with more open national and future possibilities. Not even Britain, this incredible sea empire, was more aristocratic than our holy Russia, where good style and taste and class was the supreme and ruling mind. Today, when I observe my beloved Russia from this prison cell, guarded by fanatical intolerance incarnate in these Bolsheviks without a heart, I can but draw attention to the fact, that Russia now has fallen from the state of a divine and stable monarchy down to the level of a most disorganized, inhuman and chaotic turbulence of lawless ants whose queen is this infallible Marxist man called Lenin. All that I know of him is that he as a human being had another name which was Ulyanov.

Today I have to realize that all there is for me to do is to resign completely. Nothing more remains except the very bitter end.

A Hungarian dancer:

- You are doing very well, Lajos. One day you'll perhaps become as great as Nijinsky.
 - That's exactly what I'm aiming at.
 - At least you're not wanting in ambitions!
- Lajos' teacher smiled with quiet pleasure.
- How are you doing at school, Lajos? Have you found any favourite subjects yet?
 - Yes, history.
 - Are you already studying history?
 - Of course, but I also study it privately.
 - And what is so appealing about history?
 - The history of Greece and England above all. When I am of age I will visit them both.
 - As a world famous ballet dancer?
 - Exactly!

Lajos and his father have walked up together to the Fisherman's Bastion, where they stand admiring their city.

- Behold your native town of Budapest, my boy. I promise you that there is no town in the world more beautiful than this our queen of Danube. I have been all over Europe, I have seen Paris, London, Rome and Venice, but none of these can challenge our capital in natural beauty. Grow up carefully, my boy, for destiny has granted you the privilege of growing up in the most beautiful city in the world.

I don't like, though, that you insist on becoming a ballet dancer. You ought to become a solid business man instead like myself. You are the son of one of the oldest and noblest families of your country, and you ought to prove yourself worthy of your name by becoming something better than a ballet dancer. But since you are persistent and since I love you, I will always support you whatever you choose to do with yourself.

- What is a nazi, father?
- A nazi is a monstrous fool.
- Is Mussolini a nazi?
- No, Mussolini is honest, although he is too familiar with the upstart Hitler.
- Is Hitler a nazi?
- Yes, Hitler is a nazi. Beware of him and of everyone who is foolish enough to take him seriously.

Several years have passed. The year is now 1938. Lajos is a young ballet dancer at the academy of the Budapest opera house. The seizure of Austria by Hitler has just shocked the world. Storm clouds gather over Europe.

But Hungary is safe. We live apart from all the important nations and are not noticed except by tourists, and in that modesty we have all our safety and happiness. I actually doubt that any people in the world today is happier and more harmonious than we Hungarians.

And we are loved by all the world. Budapest is not as much frequented by the richest tourists as for instance Rome, Venice and Florence, but all those who actually find us out are quite unanimous about my own wonderful town of Budapest being the most beautiful city in Europe.

And if there will be war it will be no concern of ours. We will have nothing to do with it, we are wise enough to keep out of all historical revolutions, and we only support those we must and use weapons only if we really must. If only all nations on earth thought the same way! Why is not the entire world as completely unpretentious as Hungary!



They say the Germans are persecuting all Jews. How childish, stupid, ignorant and ridiculous can people become!

Tonight I am dancing my first great leading role at the opera. My career lies in front of me opening up in glory. Everyone who has seen me dancing is certain of that I might become another Nijinsky, and I'm not going to give in until I have fulfilled my ambitions.

O, how wonderful Budapest is this evening! I have made a great success, life is wonderful, and my city is more beautiful than ever! Just look how the powerful Chain Bridge raises its magnificent splendid shining gates above the water, and how the slender span of the Elizabeth Bridge mirrors itself in the waters of the calm broad river, and how people there in the restaurant are drinking, laughing, joking and eating while charming gipsies play for them on their soft enchanting violins! In truth, I don't think there could exist a more pleasure-loving, kind and smiling people in the world.

Come on, Miklos, and visit my flat! You have to see it! It's really fine. My parents gave it to me. The house is not one of the best, but the host and the neighbours are good people. And one room with a kitchenette is good enough for me.

Don't you agree? It's a nice dwelling-place. I clean it every day and am proud of it, although it is only temporary.

How terrible that the Germans have bombed Warsaw! What have the Poles done to them? The big question now is: what will the British do?

I wonder what it is like in England. It must be a wonderful country, since our own Alexander Korda and Leslie Howard have found themselves at home there and still do. And their films are of course the best pictures in the world! And I don't say so because I am a Hungarian but because you couldn't say anything else, if you only have a sense of taste.

I feel sorry for Vienna and Austria. How they must suffer under the yoke of those wild, brutal and barbaric north Germans! But even sorer of course I feel about Finland.

And soon it will probably be our turn. But we are wise enough not to fight. We subordinate ourselves to the mighty powers and let them have their quarrels between themselves above our heads. We have nothing to do with them.

And Budapest they cannot touch.

France is falling like a house of cards. That proves what I always suspected: there isn't much grit in the Frenchies.

But the English keep on fighting. Winston Churchill is like an immovable block of granite which all England is protecting herself with, and with such an umbrella against the storm the British will survive anything. They constitute indeed a most noble and admirable nation.

My friend Miklos is angry with the Americans since they don't participate in the great fight. He says that Nazism is something which every man ought to fight unto death, that it is a human blazing fire of folly which must be extinguished at all costs and that it is a shame that the abundantly rich Americans fail to see their responsibility. He says that Nazism is the greatest peril in the history of mankind, but I think he is exaggerating. He knows much more than I, though.

He used to be an admirer of Mussolini, but now he hates Mussolini for allying himself with Hitler. He hates the war and says that the end of the world is near. It is strange that he at the same time is such a pious and faithful catholic.

I have joined the anti-nazistic movement. I have already given all important vows, and I have sworn never to dance in public again until Hungary has regained her total independence and freedom from the influence of Germans. I believe in the ideology of the movement.

Our minister-president Pál Téliki has committed suicide as a protest against the German demand of our participation in the war. This is the worst experience of my life so far.

Hitler is a mad dog that ought to be shot.

What will the world be like once the war is over? Will England ever again become as noble and powerful as it used to be? What will become of Mussolini? Will I still have the desire to exhibit myself as a dancer when the world will be lying in ruins?

Hurray for Japan and their attack against Pearl Harbour! At last America is forced to join the war!

The Germans are bombing London. It must be terrible for the English to endure the burning destruction of their own capital.

Miklos is certain that Europe is perishing, and I believe he is right. The Nazis are vanquishing everything, spreading their poison everywhere and paralyzing everything of human value, which includes their own unparalleled culture. How is it possible for the Germany of Goethe, Schiller, Bach, Beethoven and Brahms to produce such loathsome dogs as Hitler, Goering and Goebbels? How is it possible for such a terrible change to occur in such a richly cultivated land so suddenly? I can't understand it.

I hear that the Germans have been defeated at Stalingrad, but I am not enthusiastic. It would have pleased me more if the Greeks had resisted the Germans at Thermopylae, if the Norwegians had beaten them at Narvik or if the British had recaptured Dunkirk.

For if Hitler is a mad dog, then Stalin is the most dangerous, poisonous and evil of infernal worms.

No matter how deplorable and rotten the world is all around us, we are still living in Budapest, the most beautiful and peaceful among cities. And as long as I have my Budapest to enjoy and love I remain contented, because to have Budapest is to have everything.

I have broken my anti-nazistic vow never to dance again in public as long as the Nazis have any influence in Hungary. I couldn't resist giving an example of my art to a wonderful audience who actually was longing to see me dance again. Is it wrong to break political vows for the sake of art and the edification of people? I am afraid that my friends in the union will think so, and consequently I am running the risk of getting sorted out.

I have no friends any more. All my best friends were anti-nazis, and now as a consequence of my acting they are freezing me out. They probably hate themselves for doing so, but they must stick to their principles. I understand them, and despite the fact that I am now a stranger to reality I still have my world left and my Budapest and even my audience, if ever I would like to dance again, which is hardly probable.

The balance of power has changed. The Russians are now defeating the Nazis, and they are now coming closer to Europe every day. Englishmen and Americans have made considerable progress in Africa, but how I long for their invasion of Europe as well! I am shuddering at the thought of Europe lying wide open to the advancing tyranny of Stalin.

What a marvel is that Churchill of the English! As a personality he completely outweighs both the terror of the murderous Hitler and the poisonous satanic oppression of that smiling snake called Stalin.

At last the allies are doing something. They have landed in Normandy and marched up through Italy, but I wish they had done it a little earlier. The Russians are already in Poland!

What a ghastly business this war is! The Nazis have already lost it, but they refuse to give up until they have succeeded in ruining and destroying all Europe. The ancient Italian classical towns are falling into cinders, the opera of operas, the Scala of Milan, has been bombed, Monte Cassino is no more, as if the most precious shrines of culture were the chief targets of all war vehemence, Paris and London are half bombed to debris, if you are to believe what you hear, and each day another medieval town in Germany, Italy or Poland is forever levelled with the ground. The people who are handling this war don't know each other and don't fight with each other but concentrate their energies instead on wiping out each other's civilizations. When the war is over nothing will remain of the civilized world except America, whose comfortable citizens will happily roll their thumbs far away on the other side of the ocean caring nothing for the ruins of Europe. And I worry greatly about the coming fate of my Budapest.

According to what I've heard, the capital of the unhappy Poland, the ancient city of Warsaw, has been completely deleted because of the whim of one nazistic officer.

Bombs are falling over Budapest. I hear them whistle and explode where I am lying in the hospital of St. Mary Magdalene just outside the city. I ignored the sirens when they started blowing, I heard the buzzing and booming of the coming airplanes and prepared myself for doomsday. I was hit in the leg by something as the first showers of bombs struck the city and became unconscious immediately; and according to the vague intimations of my shy nurse my right knee is probably damaged for good. I hear the falling of the bombs far away in the burning exploding city and wish that I were dead. I wish that the first bomb which was dropped on Budapest had killed me.

I may soon leave the hospital and go home to my family on our estate at Szombathely to be taken care of there until I am fully restored to health. The Russians are now besieging our capital, unfortunately the Germans will not abandon

it, and day and night I hear bombs, cannons and machine-guns. Whenever I manage to sleep one hour or two I always have torturous nightmares.

I will never again be able to bend my knee. It is damaged and locked, and at the moment I am desperately trying to learn how to walk or rather how to limp with a cane.

O why didn't the English invade Greece instead of Italy? If they had, Hungary might perhaps have been saved from the hands of Stalin.

I remain in Szombathely, but I long to get back to Budapest. The Russians and Germans are fighting hard with each other, the German defence is concentrated to the most beautiful parts of the town, they say the royal palace is very badly damaged, and I curse this war of the Nazis daily and every minute of my life. My own family doesn't recognize me any more.

I pray to God every morning and evening that all Germans and Russians may be out of Budapest at least before Christmas.

I have left Szombathely and journey to Budapest by train. The snow lies pure and white on the ground as far as you can see, it is ice-cold outside, and in every way the world seems frozen to the core. I see nothing but misery and exhaustion everywhere, and it is obvious that the Russians already are more unpopular in our country than ever the Germans were.

In spite of the fact that I know everything to be dead in Budapest and that there are still Nazis left fighting, I long to get there. I have never longed so ardently to get home to my city as I do now from this hell of frozen silence.

The train has stopped outside the city. I am tired to death and intend to spend the night in a hotel. Tomorrow I will continue my journey.

It is Sunday morning. It is not even seven o'clock yet. Heaven is grey, the air is icingly cold, but everything is quite still. I walk along the quays of Budapest.

No bridges are left. The Chain Bridge descends abruptly into the icy water, and of the Elizabeth Bridge nothing remains except vague ruins. The stately Royal Castle lies in heaps of debris on the mountain hill, and the church of St. Matthias is also badly damaged. Everything is ruined. Gradually I begin to realize that Budapest no longer exists.

I wander through quiet streets where violins used to sing and beautiful girls used to dance. Along this street, by which all the best restaurants were situated, I only find chaotic rubble. Gone are the merry guests, and gone are also the efficient waiters. Even the trees are gone.

I encounter a small beggar boy. I ask him where his parents live. His answer is of course that they both are dead. I ask him who they were and where they used to live, and I am informed that his father was a baron.



I continue my limp with my cane, and naturally my eyes are all wet. Budapest, which I left four months ago, has during my absence been turned into a ghost.

There is still some firing going on disturbing the morning silence, but it leaves me completely indifferent. I don't care if a Russian or a German shoots me to death who doesn't even know the name of this city.

The opera is still there but has been damaged and plundered like everything else. In the house of the theatre I find traces of violent fights, ruthless love of destruction and terrible orgies. A dead woman is lying stinking in the orchestra.

But from somewhere I hear the voices of playing children. Their laughter is like echoes from a happy world of yesterday which today is hopelessly dead.

I depart from the theatre to go limping on my stick home to my flat the house of which oddly enough still is standing there. I lock up my door, enter my room and lie down on my bed. There finally I can't help bursting into desperate uncontrolled tears.

"Do you believe in a life after death?" my good friend Elizabeth asks me where we are sitting in a dusky café having a cheap and dirty lunch together. I answer her that it doesn't matter whether we are immortal or not, because whatever we are we have to accept it. I am not in a talkative mood, she notices it and falls quiet.

With pain in my heart I remember the time when I used to be deeply in love with her but never dared to confess it. She looks down into her plate while she's eating. I wonder as usual what she might be thinking of but dare as usual not put the question.

When she has eaten enough from the nauseating pottage on her plate she asks me without looking at me: "Will you ever be able to dance again?"

My answer is short: "No." And I finish my eating without looking at her any more, and when I am finished we rise and leave the sordid place. We say good-bye to each other without seeing each other any more.

I haven't shaved for many days and haven't washed myself either. I also sleep with my clothes on and begin more and more to accept a life without neither purpose nor substance. In the evenings I go to a small café where I sit composing choreographies, and there it sometimes happens that I meet with some acquaintance. In that case I leave it to him to start a conversation, because I don't like intruding into someone else's area unless he invites me to. Rather soon the acquaintances I meet with cease to accost me.

I also begin to acquire wine-drinking habits, for somehow the acridity of wine corresponds to that of life, which observation ever fascinates me.

As time goes by I even begin to fall down to masturbating habits, but cease, oh, honest diary! I must not display all of my depraved spiritual life.

People are beginning to do something about all the ruins which makes the whole city untidy and especially those parts of ancient Buda where all the most beautiful buildings lay. Pontoon bridges have now been stretched across the river, and with their ugliness they disgrace the water as much as they do the city. Somewhere I am notified of that the allies have levelled Berlin, Dresden, Hamburg, Lubeck, Hannover, Colonia, Hildesheim and Chemnitz with the ground and that Hitler has killed himself with his mistress in a bunker, but I am left completely untouched by all this. I spend my days dreaming of the past and embellishing it with my imagination.

The former anti-nazistic movement in which all my best friends were members has now changed colour according to the climate and turned anti-communist. Since the Russian conquerors of Hungary are making our land communist, the union of my friends has been obliged to turn into an underground movement, and they invite me to become one of them. I would gladly please them by accepting, but I consider it wrong to do so since I am no longer at all politically interested, which I have to clarify to them. Our discussion ends with my becoming a member anyway, and I must admit that I feel a certain satisfaction about it.

Time passes quickly when you no longer have anything to do with it. The anti-communist movement is now a political party, and I worry about my friends, for the Russians are trying to get at them.

My flat is like an old forgotten and infected garret. I haven't cleaned it for a year, and there are dead rats in the pantry which I haven't bothered to throw out yet. Each

day my apartment is getting more depressing, stuffy, dreary, dark and grey, and I will never do anything about it.

My host and my neighbours are avoiding me, and they are doing the right thing, for I am even less interested in saluting them than they are in visiting me.

I was arrested today and tortured. The Russians apparently know something about my connections with the underground anti-communist organization, for they are tempting me with generous bribes to give away my friends. Of course I cannot do that under any circumstances.

They have ordered me to present myself at their office each morning at ten o'clock. Why can't they leave me alone? Why can't they see that all I am good for is to be left in peace?

This night a car stopped outside my house to collect Dr. Merschner and his wife. They have not come back. Other people collected in the same way in the middle of the night have never come back.

I am now wilfully neglecting to appear and report at the bloody office of the Russians. That's my personal revenge for their having shown me photographs of my friend Miklos after they executed him. I don't care what happens. I can't sink any deeper nor lose more anyway than I've done already.

The Russians are threatening me. They will probably take care of me soon. I went up to the Fisherman's Bastion today to have a full view of Budapest maybe for the last time. It was a most deplorable sight. It wouldn't surprise me if among all the ruined cities of Europe Budapest, the most beautiful one, was also the most destroyed one. It wouldn't surprise me either if of all the approaching tribulations of eastern Europe the very worst would befall the Hungarians.

Father, it is very kind of you to visit me, but there is nothing you can do for me. Leave me alone. Take care of yourselves and let me take care of myself. "But your life is no life," says father. That's exactly why, I respond, you must leave me alone. "But you must do something," he keeps nagging on. Do something yourselves, I almost cry at him. The best thing you could do is to abandon the sinking ship of this country. Get out of here and go to Austria, while it is still possible! But I am staying here. "Why?" That has got nothing to do with you.

Forget your son, denounce him as the doomed failure with a wooden leg he so hopelessly has turned into. Think of the living and forget the dead. From now on I shall be dead to you. If you come back here again I shall keep away or pretend not to be at home. You are crying. You shouldn't have come here. As long as I live I will only give you pain and sorrow. Keep away from me for your own sake.

And crying bitterly my father leaves my apartment, the state of which has been a greater shock to him than the state of myself.

How fain would I not go abroad! But what would be the use of it? If I leave this country hoping to find a better life outside I would surely only become even more disappointed.

I saw Elizabeth in the street today. She didn't salute me, and I didn't give her any sign of recognition. We passed each other by on the opposite sides of the street as if we never had known each other. The last thing in the world I want is to involve her in my troubles.

The communists are now established. I have heard rumours about admiral Horthy, our former regent, being in Holland. It is wonderful that he doesn't have to witness the end of Hungary at an all too painfully short distance.

Every other night I hear the black vans of the secret police stop in the vicinity to carry away innocent, educated and talented people whose only crime is that they are thinking their own thoughts. Why does such a van never finally come in order to take care of me?

I love Hungary, and I will always love my beloved Hungary. No one can take my love away from me, for it is moulded in my soul, and my soul is the only thing of any value which I am still in possession of.

And whatever the Russians might do with me, the wonderful Hungary of once upon a time will always be alive, if nowhere else, then within my own soul. Let my countrymen betray and deny and even forget their country if they like, but I myself will never do so.

The Russians are making a big thing out of the horrors of the German concentration camps and all the innocent millions which have been sacrificed therein, but where are they taking their own opponents? Where are all those people sent who every night are being secretly arrested and taken away never to return?

If someone is pointing out the dirt with someone else, he is only the dirtier himself.

Hungary was a peaceful country inhabited by wonderful unpretentious people who didn't in any way challenge or interfere with the world order. They had the most beautiful city in the world for their capital, and they all loved life above all and next to it each other. In spite of all this total innocence, a tyrant vanquished their country, foreign soldiers fought about and destroyed their capital, and all these violent strangers by unmotivated force ruined the lives of uncountable innocent Hungarian people and their future. Why? What did Hungary do to deserve all this?

I hear a car of greater size stop outside the apartment house in which I live. Are they coming for me, or will they visit my neighbour? My neighbour is probably

wondering the same thing. He is hoping desperately that they are coming for me, and so am I. Secret policemen are coming a-clumping up the stairs. I am tensely listening. Finally they stop just outside my door. The next moment they begin to knock without pardon. I give a sigh of relief. At last it has become my turn.

I open the door most politely to them asking them to come in. They command me to follow them. "With pleasure," I answer fetching my coat. Then I follow them out from my cage of so much waiting for my destiny.

They soon notice that I am limping and using a cane, wherefore they decide to carry me under my arms down the stairs, to quicken the process. I am pushed inside their big black car, where many others already are sitting waiting for me. We are all to be transported to what I hope to be a quick death without much pain. But our last hopes are in vain. Like the Jews in Hitler's Germany we are going to be used for slave labour in which we automatically, gradually and insufferably slowly will die from overwork and starvation. No one admires and learns more from a tyrant than a tyrant.

Well, here I interrupt the story of my life. There will probably not be much to add, since I most probably will be taken care of more efficiently than all the other prisoners of this black car, most of them being young and fresh students, academicians, doctors, apothecaries, surgeons and once upon a time aristocrats, while my good luck has made me an invalid and of no use in hard labour as a good collaborating slave with orders to be happy in my work. But on closer examination most of us are anyway just as incapacitated as myself, for I can't think that anyone of us any longer can find any reason why he should stay alive.

1971:

The situation of the world has never looked as hopeless as it does today. Not for one moment have wars ceased to start again since the latest world war, and those of Korea and Indochina are only two examples. The established aristocracies, which formerly provided all lustre and refinement of society, have ceased to exist in practically the whole world except in England. Nature, the oceans and all universal life is gradually being poisoned to death by the evil genius of civilization, the waste products of industrialism. People are thronging, starving and multiplying themselves like rats at a statistically ever increasing self-destructive rate, which cannot be controlled even by nature. Classical education and culture is today regarded as something peculiar which an exclusive and ever shrinking élite of humanists have a steadily more vague conception about. Education at school is constantly being worsened all over the world with the United States of America as a leading head, so that young people rather are brought up to mental anarchy than to learning something. The fine arts have during our century degenerated, dissolved and been degraded so far that they nowadays almost only are being used for political propaganda or capitalistic investments. Humanity is cleft in two categories: socialism

and capitalism, and both ideologies are exaggerated, unnatural, inhuman and blind to reasonable moderation and golden means. And in the air there is a constant universal fear and imminent danger of an ultimate holocaust of a nuclear war.

The demagogues are constantly arguing about more equality and social justice and want to form a human society even more into a society of insects than it already is. Everything is nowadays valued and analysed according to the strictly sterile scientific method: if there is a future for humanity in spite of all, then all symptoms are in that case indicating an established vulgar barbarity in scientific disguise controlling people by specially arranged forms of mass communication serving as a constant brainwash. History is being forgotten, languages are being corrupted, morals keep disappearing, religions are being laughed at, and violence is constantly increasing well fed by drugs and examples of so called heroes from movies and television. The totalitarian states of the world have never been stronger than they are today, founded as they are on the lies of materialistic science, which is used as a machinery to control all human beings by the ruthless misuse of technological perfection.

More than in anything else, the desperate situation of the world is being mirrored in the modern form of architecture, which in its total nakedness, lack of taste, beauty and imagination and in its sterile inhumanity excels all ugliness which ever appeared on earth. The modern great cities have grown into harder, more dangerous and more awful jungles and deserts than Amazonas and the Sahara. They constitute a modern materialistic scientific wilderness in which only creatures without conscience can survive and find themselves at home, like blind termites in termite stacks.

The world has never been as destructive of life as it is today. From a natural point of view, the age of the mammoths and the dinosaurs was much more tolerable to all forms of life than the age of humanity is today. For our terrible dilemma is, that materialism, industrialism, functionalism and all those terrible and unnatural things which disgrace and soil Dame Nature today have gone too far to be able to be disposed of. The illness called pollution which humankind has cultivated in the world during two centuries only, would take many thousand years to cure by nature. 500 million years of natural life is threatened to death by the undisciplined scientific licence made law by man two centuries ago.

The privilege of science then is apparently sheer folly and madness and at least a serious mistake, being often more harmful than useful and thereby as vain and meaningless as all human endeavour ever has been except love, which never has been scientifically sterile.

Science has not even succeeded in easing the sufferings of humanity and in finding the answers to the eternal queries. For each world disease which has been successfully cured by medicine, another has appeared instead, and the ravages of pestilence and tuberculosis were nothing to the problems of cancer and medicinal drug abuse, for instance. Science has discovered that the world is round, the infinity of the universe, that the human being is a descendant from the lung fish and so on, but whatever is discovered through scientific research, science will only encounter

new insolvable mysteries. We will never have any certainty or full control of life, wherefore all scientific knowledge ever will remain inadequate.

Another incurable vanity of man is bigotry. There are hundreds of varying religious views of life, which each one claims to be the only proper faith and is prepared to fight all rivals of it unto the bitter end. Even through metaphysical means it is impossible for man to get himself oriented.

The greatest menace to life on earth has proved to be the dogmatic infallibility of human scientific progress. Bigotry and materialism are man's chief weapons in destroying the earth. Through materialism man has turned himself into the supreme enemy of life by constructing the atomic bomb, and with "the only proper faith" for an instrument he has excited himself to hysterical bloodthirst and cruelty of a quality surpassing that of the Tyrannosaurus Rex. Just look at the medieval muslims, the inquisitors of the renaissance and the socialists of our age, the German national socialists, the Russian Stalinists and the Chinese Maoists.

Science and dogmas apparently are condemnable as causes, since man through them has always turned self-destructive. But then we face the most insolvable of questions: whatever then is the meaning of life? What is left if we remove all the rotten weeds which man in the name of bigotry and materialistic science has sown all over the world in the form of meaningless short-sighted senseless destruction?

Let's have a look. Let's return to the age before the days of Buddha and Aristotle when religions only were mythologies and when science only was something for intelligent people to play with writing in the sand. What did that ancient world look like? What was the secret of Hellas, the ancient Greece, which was lost forever when that nation was overrun by barbarity? Let's go back there and have a look.

Homer:

See how the ocean is sparkling with light! Behold our blessed divine archipelago, this our country of heavenly islands, how splendidly it is endowed with the light of the gods! It's the wonderful country so loved by the lovable Aphrodite, so well enlightened with virtuous sons of Apollo, so well circumfused with the light and so haloed with honour by Zeus, and so well protected by the invisible triremes of faithful Poseidon. This is my own country, the land of the future, for her blessed light is too bright to be able to ever cease shining. This is my own most loved homeland of Hellas.

Wherein lies the secret of Hellas? What might be the source of her light and the origin of all her greatness and energy? What is the reason for her so unparalleled charm and vitality, her intellectual unsurpassed brilliance? Her secret is that she is loved by the gods and that they have most graciously left all their love with humanity for an inheritance. No land was ever more loved on this earth, and for that reason only was never a land more perfected.

Of course, the gods Amon and Aton loved the rich land of the Nile, but they taught their priests and the great pharaoh only to worship themselves. The good kings of the land of the two rivers did certainly love their great cities and plains, but they never did enter the thought of conserving and further developing their unique love for the future. The kingdom of Persia is certainly also most loved by the powerful Ormuzd, but what is that love worth when its sole result is the practice of tyranny and of oppression of neighbouring peoples? The contrary is represented by us, the Hellenes, who were taught to love only according to the divine practice of gods, for in the very same way in which fathers love their own children do we love and cherish our nation. And that's why our love is eternal, for parents can never deny or abandon their children, not even if their wayward child early suffers a death of dishonour and failure of courage.

The future belongs to our country, and I have a personal dream of her living forever as the mother of civilization. There is only one risk and danger which possibly ever could lead to disaster for her, and that risk is ourselves. If our love for our nation will cease or decline, or if we in some way prove unworthy of her blessed earth, there is nothing to save her. For if we ourselves fail in serving her, Hellas will fall, since we constitute Hellas.

I'm investigating the future, Completely and hopelessly blind I can see all that eyes cannot see. I dislike what I see. I behold depravation, corruption and powerlessness led by folly and madness. Begone, o most terrible sight! O, Hellenes! Are you then also going to perish, the most blessed hope of the world? Father Zeus, please help me! Endow me with strength to prevent such a ghastly development by cultivating the right way of love and the spirit of Hellas! Olympian fathers and highest divinities, if you love Hellas, I beg for your blessed support in the work which my life will consist of: to strengthen with care and build up the self-confidence of the Hellenes. For I think they could find unanimity and continuity as the world's fathers forever if they will find out that they all are Hellenes.

They incline at the moment to listening to ancient legends from singers. I will then become a good singer, the letter and lyre will be my two most favourite instruments, there is a great work ahead of me, and once again I will sacrifice to all the gods to ask them most ardently to give me then proper ability, power and patience which will be most needful for the consummation of my most demanding and difficult task, and to also bestow on me courage in good preparation for what the invisible imminent future may choose to be holding in store for me, for all my brothers, my countrymen, and for our Hellas.

Apollo, the highest impersonation of light, you protector of human ideals and their guide, my experience of you is my foremost support, and I thank you for your inspiration.

You leader of men in their ways, noble Hermes, you wonderful neutral preserver, I deeply revere you for being my conscience who never keeps quiet. Please be at my side on my travels, for you are the sole god of reliability.

Poseidon, the ruler of nature and of all the oceans, misjudged lonely wanderer and I believe greatest lover of all, your protection I can but regard as invaluable. Of all gods you alone are to me like a personal friend.

Good Athena, virtuous virgin and goddess of cities and of all the future, the fact that you more than the others concern yourself greatly about our future makes me turn my eyes up to you more than to all the others. Thanks greatly for your kind support in my serious work!

Aphrodite, the most beautiful of all divinities, thou most desirable and most reserved and adored among gods, you alone are the perfect ideal of beauty, with you all beautiful taste and existence begins, for before you there never was anything beautiful while now you make this our world to a world but of beauty.

Hephaestus, you poor sullen invalid, you are perhaps the most worthy of gods. For who is more benevolent a benefactor to mankind than you? All our arts, all our powers of handicraft, skill and exactness come only from you, the constructive great giver and originator of labour and its benefits.

Mad Dionysus, you childish naïve simple innocent god, you're the only one among the gods whom I love without seriousness. For what are you if not the only originator of degeneration, irresponsibility and every form of corruption? I thank you though anyway for all the blessed and needful escapes from reality and the dryness of reason which no one can really be human without.

Hera, heavenly queen among queens, thou the equal of Zeus and most incomparable woman, you share with your husband the ultimate power and strength. Both together you make the greatest, the fittest and wisest world rulers that ever existed in history. For this I thank you, and I wish sincerely that you may forever adorn the divine throne of world order.

You father of all and the lord of the universe, thee I salute, father Zeus with thankfulness just for the fact that you are. For what would be the world without you if not chaos alone without hope? Thee I also salute as the sole creator of Hellas.

Artemis, you pious exemplary virgin, you are the unique consummation of virtue. Your softness, your grace, your humility and your inscrutability makes you the most mysterious, attractive and most supernatural of all divinities although you are nothing but nature. You are the unreachable castle of air which all long for but no one may touch from respect of your beatitude. You are the only one of the Olympian divinities whom I love personally.

Benefactor and doctor Asclepius, thou unhappy friend of humanity who angered Zeus with your love for the mortals, I pay you my homage for being the first and most faithful of friends to humanity. Tragically and unfortunately you did never succeed in your purpose to give the Hellenes immortality.

Noble Prometheus, greatest of heroes, thou titan and son of humanity who with your love proved yourself to be more than a god, I salute you for being the originator

of the irrepressibility of the spirit of mankind. You gave Hellas her divine light, hope and glory and was the first of divine missionaries to humanity, and your work has never been surpassed. For what was the only successful result of your mission if not the undying hope of human happiness as a most possible thing?

Glorious Hellas, why isn't the whole world just one archipelago of your blue wonderful waters and heavenly islands? Why are there impossible deserts, unchallengeable unsurmountable ranges of mountains, forbidding and dangerous jungles and stormy unfathomable seas and oceans without any shores for a limit? Why isn't the whole world as friendly and human as Hellas?

But naturally the whole world cannot be just a paradise. Beauty on one side can never exist without consequent horribleness on the other. You cannot demand of all people to be only good; they have tempers which have to find outlets occasionally for less rational actions. There is not a one-sided thing or phenomenon in the existence of human affairs; everything has two sides, one of happiness and one of misery. Even the world has two sides, and our nation of Hellas is only the highest ideal of the best side of life. Beyond Hellas is Italy, Persia, the sea, death, and Libya.

Even our Hellas has two different natural sides. Even we have to suffer and war, we are capable of beastly cruelty against our enemies, we can be poor and unhappy and sullen occasionally like professional misanthropes, for if we fail to fight against dire adversities we would not find any pleasure in having the contrary. And we must never forget that the contrary only is of any consequence.

The only real thing of consequence, finally, is the matter called love. I am old now and wise from a long life of hard tribulations and arduous work and experience of dire adversities, but all I have learned is ultimately that the only thing of any value is love. All is perishable, mortal, vain and without any meaning except the phenomenon of human love, which is the only key to eternity. Even if Hellas were to perish tomorrow in spite of my work, the divine love of Hellas would always persist and survive and forever be proving the fact to posterity that in our Hellas all history reached its most definite climax and mankind its highest degree of self-realization and glory. For the only thing that you need to make something eternal is only to love it. And much more than anything else was once Hellas loved by human beings.

When love dies it only dies to one day be resurrected. If other Hellenes of the future will lose their home country and even their love of it, I believe it will be most incidental. Whatever will happen to us in the future, the spirit of Hellas will ever continue and one day, perhaps in the next age or the next eternity, once more arise from the dead in more brilliant splendour than ever.

Concluding my singing I will only say this, that nothing is anything worth except love. Only love gives a meaning to life. All that's worth to be living for is love. There is nothing but meaningless emptiness as an alternative. My life has only been love, and my love has been my life's sole meaning and purpose and energy. I don't think any man could find a better or more splendid privilege. For when your love is secured, which is life's only meaning, there is nothing more to be gained.

Farewell, Hellas, my country! Remember to grant all humanity the capability and the discovery of human love.

And good-bye, my good brothers and friends, and remember, that characteristic of a true Hellene is not masculine competence, power or strength but his genuine love and its reliability only.

The End.

*(Written in one night around 12th August 1971,
translated around 1989.)*

