



Topic 1.

“A free man thinks of death least of all things; and his wisdom is a meditation of life, not of death.

Proof.—A free man, that is, he who lives solely according to the dictates of reason, is not guided by fear of death, but directly desires the good; that is, to act, to live, to preserve his own being in accordance with the principle of seeking his own advantage. So he thinks of death least of all things, and his wisdom is a meditation upon life. Q.E.D.”

—Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics, Demonstrated in Geometrical Order* (Part IV, prop. 67), 1677.

Topic 2.

“Femininity itself has become a brand, a narrow and shrinking formula of commoditised identity which can be sold back to women who have become alienated from their own power as living, loving, labouring beings.”

—Laurie Penny, *Meat Market: Female Flesh Under Capitalism* (introduction), 2010.

Topic 3.

“The ‘apparent’ world is the only one: the ‘true’ world is merely added by a lie.”

—Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* (III, § 2), 1895.

Topic 4.

“A number of porcupines huddled together for warmth on a cold day in winter; but, as they began to prick one another with their quills, they were obliged to disperse. However the cold drove them together again, when just the same thing happened. At last, after many turns of huddling and dispersing, they discovered that they would be best off by remaining at a little distance from one another. In the same way the need of society drives the human porcupines together, only to be mutually repelled by the many prickly and disagreeable qualities of their nature. The moderate distance which they at last discover to be the only tolerable condition of intercourse, is the code of politeness and fine manners; and those who transgress it are roughly told—in the English phrase—to keep their distance.”

—Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena* (volume II, chapter XXXI, section 396), 1851.