**SOME THOUGHTS**

**What could be more pessimistic than believing the whole world is very close to its end, through a cosmic event that will destroy the planet Earth?   
So many times, in History have crowds suddenly become sure mankind was on the brink of disappearance, in most cases with no apparent real menace. There are mentions of collective worries of this kind dating back to first known civilizations.  
Those born in the last century easily recall several occasions on which differently inspired ‘doomsdays’ boasted on the international press.**

**Indeed, some of these prophecies have been taken rather seriously by a lot of people, despite being clear that most warnings have been posed by people in the sole search of big profits. Well, "snake oil sellers" now selling doomsdays.**

**More recently, in the year 2012 global worries focused on the December 21st (Northern Hemisphere Winter Solstice), which ancient Mayan astronomers pointed as the end of their millennial calendar, mysteriously accurate. Experts got quite impressed by that ancient civilization's so advanced astronomy, wondering how could they so exactly foresee stars’ positions to happen thousands of years after their own observations.  
Conjecturing now, or freely fantasizing, could Mayan sages have foreseen a mankind's degeneration which would someday come as a consequence of a deep moral and ethical decay?  
Fears of the End Times seem nowadays on the rise, maybe due to this stupid speeding up of time flow: at each passing day men and women leave less hours for their leisure, simply because they do not want to miss the 'train' taken by those striving hard to reach first a supposed treasure in the end of the world (lyrics inside the box below).  
The so speedy emergence of new high technological devices, whose usefulness so often no is allowed to put in question, turns our lives increasingly shorter regarding time for ourselves, for leisure, for free thinking. But paradoxically, human empirical bodies, 'les machines desirantes’, or desiring machines according to French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Gattari, keep getting more prolonged lifespans, which means our bodies have now a larger duration than ever before. Well, the word 'duration' here is, really, the most appropriate since it denotes only a mechanical sense.**

**"At world's end there is a treasure,**

**Whoever goes first gets the gold".**

**Excerpt from "Pois é, pra quê?"[Well, What For?], by MPB4 (Brazilian Popular Quartet), free translation**

**Why do human beings think so much about doomsday? Could that be a way to avoid thinking on our own personal death? Maybe there is a delusional and sadistic pleasure in fantasizing to bring all mankind to nothing in one’s own personal death? Why do human beings along their History think so often about doomsday? Could there be a profit to our inner equilibrium of pleasure and pain when we believe that doomsday is nearing, as suggested by Sigmund Freud? Analogously to the instinctive dynamics enunciated by Nietzsche when wrote that humans prefer to want the nothingness rather than not wanting at all?**

**Uma imagem contendo interior, chão

Descrição gerada automaticamente**

**‘The Land of Cockaigne’, by Pietr Bruegel, the Elder, 1567**

**PROLOGUE  
The movie’s first scenes are plenty of images suggesting a deeply grievous time: a bride lying on a pool like a corpse, lots of birds falling dead from the sky, a mother desperately grabbing her child, being sure of the worst for both. Following these pictures comes the 'swallowing' of the Earth by a giant wanderer planet. So, this film has a prologue that may be an epilogue too, in which the main protagonist Justine and her sister Claire, mother in despair for the imminent death of her little son, Leonard, appear in mute scenes of surrealistic hue. From the beginning the watcher becomes aware that there will be absolutely no hope for mankind on the screen. Could this be a clue to von Trier's belief that our species unavoidably nears its terminal collapse which no human efforts will be able to reverse? Does this mean that this movie maker’s world vision bears too much pessimism? Is he a great, bitter pessimistic as much as Arthur Schopenhauer? Or is such an attribute inappropriate, perhaps even for both? Perceiving and uttering a bad truth may be properly called as a pessimistic action?  
The remaining drama is divided into two parts: 'Justine' and 'Claire', names of the protagonist sisters. In the background you hear a beautiful aria from 'Tristan and Isolde’ by Richard Wagner. In this opera’s plot, a couple who nourishes a forbidden love must endure a highly hypocritical life during daylight, being forced to pretend the acceptance of the marriage between Isolde and King Marke.  
Only at night are they able to meet, driven by an intense passion. For Schopenhauer, so admired by Richard Wagner, the human quest to satisfy our appetites leads us to live amidst hypocrisy, deception and hopelessness. In this Wagnerian drama, this so frustrating search is symbolized by the presence of daylight. However, that philosopher told us that we are doomed to never satiate those deepest, innermost desires, and that just death can free human beings from them. Wagner symbolizes here the 'night' to mean death, only possible way to the cessation of human suffering.**

**PART ONE: Justine  
In this first plot's half, which has the same name as the main protagonist, all characters' acts seem futile, artificial, meaningless, not genuine, mechanical and induced by mass media.**

**It happens to be a quite boring and artificial wedding part, in accordance with these rampant consumerist times in which so many people ignore ethical limits in the furthering of their egoistic goals, since for them meaningful values seem to be quite out of reach, besides the fact that past utopias now lie dead and rotten. Utopias, which as insane as they were, had a corresponding ethical structure, even when quite unreal and having huge disasters as result.**

**Back to the scenes which come after the prologue: a wedding couple is on way from church towards the party, in a luxurious country house, where dozens of guests wait back to the scenes:**

**A couple is on their way from church to own wedding festivity, on a huge white limousine, while dozens of guests impatiently wait for them, for a disturbingly long time. However, the chosen, so sumptuous vehicle, would never ever cross such a so narrow, sinuous track, thence it was at last abandoned. The newlyweds decide then to walk till the bride's brother-in-law's huge mansion, their party's place.**

**A glaring nonsense! Soon it becomes evident that surely neither driver, nor groom or bride would ever be able to drive ahead that limo from such a so narrow trail, seemingly only useful for horseback riding. Weirdly, ignoring many evidences showing how impossible such a task it was, the driver is urged to make still several attempts to go ahead with the limo on that same horse path, God knows why!**

**The hyper-consumerist behavior typical of our global society, which values the flaunting of wealth, far beyond the most absurd degrees, is allegorically represented by that attempt to pass a so huge limo in a so narrow trail.**

**Human greed is destroying Earth's living Nature to foster stupid, futile personal boasting attitudes, taken for unavoidable because triggered and supported by many spectacular technological advances. Well, by many allegedly beneficial advances, which paradoxically discard their most updated devices with an at each passing day higher, dangerous speed. Unfortunately, humans behave as if believing in the European medieval myth of 'The Land of Cockaigne' [picture above], where resources were infinite, imposing no kind of restriction to the immediate fulfillment of any material desires.**

**If mankind does not stop for a while to ponder on present destruction trends, in order to change directions on this sad road, our species will very likely face the worst of imaginable disasters, in a not so far future. And why not, these trends may lead to our world's end on a doomsday, with or without God.**

**At the wedding party, our  attention is drawn by an overwhelming people's trend to a mere repetition, be it of ways of congratulating,  of behavior's patterns, of celebration rituals, or even family swoops and couples' verbal battles  seem to repeat  everywhere the eternal 'human, too human' drama.**

**Meaningless wedding rituals, emptied of any personal content related to Justine and her groom, since deprived from any genuine emotion, shock whoever launches an attentive glance to that queer human agglomeration.**

**Everybody there seems to behave as mere automata, the only exception being the bride, whose inability to hide a deep anguish is patent. Her hopeless facial expression suggests a search for other people, other places, other ways of life.**

**Claire, her sister, scolds the newlyweds for their prolonged delay, that which we know, as the movie's watchers, was by no means due to any erotic escape, but such an illusory romantic image came to guests' minds. Another clear sign those people are not paying attention to anything besides the shallowest masks, as if they were watching a TV show. John, the wealthy Justine's brother-in-law, brags by means of the old cliché used by wealthy people: "I paid for this huge great party, because I, myself,  am the owner of this property", always overtly proclaiming that he is filthy rich.**

**Bride's father strives ostentatiously to display his two female partners, unmasking this way that his narcissistic drive is all what lies behind his alleged desire for those women.**

**A very peculiar show is acted out by Justine's boss, Jack, who tries to put the whole wedding party into his own millionaire business's service, urging her incessantly to create a powerful, brilliant advertising tagline for  a new campaign involving a fac-simile of the here above Brügel's painting, right then in that night. Nothing more is said about what kind of product is to be advertised. Claiming only the bride, his best publicist's mind, could be able to invent a right slogan to skyrocket sales, Jack seems to hide some good reason to choose such a unique moment in her life. Are we allowed to speculate the item to be launched is related to sexuality? Whether so, could it be a dildo? Is a publicist bride supposed to be sexually inspired to during her wedding party? Would it be too blasphemous to suggest for brides to warrant their sexual pleasures buying a good dildo, thus freeing themselves from sexually inept husbands? Does any woman still believe a husband may give her best orgasms without sex toys?   
Well, it must be considered here no cue is given on screen regarding which kind of object is expected to have skyrocketed sales.  Notwithstanding this silence, and even perhaps supported by it, our dildo hypothesis fits with extremely coherence in this plot.  
Who dares to deny that the commodification of all aspects of our everyday life is the sole engine behind the present world political-economic system, for which ethics no more than an old-fashioned word?**

**Then it comes the newlyweds dancing 'La Bamba', a scene which impressed me a lot, since this blogger has been to several wedding parties, in which this same hectic 60s song was played.**

**Considering that plot happens in contemporary Denmark, it seems remarkable that a same song often played at weddings there, is also played here in Brazil in the same kind of parties. Should we see this as a good consequence of the present trend to globalization, perhaps even a sign of a worldwide cultural enrichment? Or might that coincidental song choice, quite in opposition to that shallow, cheerful perspective above be nothing but a sign of rampant dissemination of void, meaningless behaviors repeated all over the Earth. Every gesture, every motion is always an empty, globally widespread simulacrum of something else. Bride and groom cut their cake, bottom-up 'for luck', he feels entitled to a sudden sexual assault on her, immediately after cutting the cake, without even noticing the undisguised bride's indifference, taken as she was by intense anguish and a strong but undefined fear.**

**So, the party goes on as if following an extremely rigid script, like everything in the current cyber age:  watches are becoming every day more accurate, to no avail: hundredths of seconds, then thousandths, then millionths of seconds, and so on. What is a so high precision for, if indeed the human mind will never be capable of clearly distinguishing even the duration of a passing second?**

**The verbal fight between the divorced bride's parents is also a well-known commonplace: drunken father, mock heartthrob, authoritarian and overbearing mother, who both set out to a quarrel, without any concern for the feelings of the newlyweds.**

**The mother brags about her not been to the church ceremony uttering: "I do not believe in churches, besides hating weddings, even more so when my dearest people are involved”.**

**Each parent performs there a vivid egocentric personal drama, which apparently is just another round in the everlasting battle between genres, in their case clearly propelled by plain selfishness and meanness.**

**Neither sexist nor feminist pays any attention to their daughter’s emotions, only striving for own verbal triumph over the other, in a markedly narcissistic attitude.**

**As the groom tries to force her suddenly to have sex, Justine begs for a moment alone, away from him, getting out for a walk.**

**Tim, a young man chosen by their boss to get the so precious slogan from her mouth, through a corkscrew if needed, now chases the bride everywhere, even into the gulf field, where she goes trying to escape him. The lad's pression on that pretty, sad bride goes beyond all acceptable limits for trying to obey their boastful boss.**

**All in vain, although suddenly Justine acts out her sexual arousal and forces him to fuck her. Yes, she rapes the young man!**

**That kind of active sexual assault on a youngster guest by the bride, during the wedding, would be regarded as a shocking scene some decades ago, but not so in the 21st century. Sexual rules seem now weaker everywhere, don't they?**

**People are now supposed to enjoy a wider freedom to fuck all over the Earth, aren't they? Whether the answer is "yes, they are", may such an unlimited instinctive liberalization be regarded as a true human conquers? Does it really mean that men and women are now freer?**

**After leaving that gulf field these scenes, their boss approaches her again, then trying to manipulate Justine's supposed maternally prone emotions, arguing “the poor trainee would be fired only for not having accomplished that so important task given to him”. Obviously implied is she would be guilty for “the hard life of another unemployed young man, unless her heart puts an end to such so cruel denials”.**

**Justine answers shouting him out his agency is nothing but 'pure shit', all "his workings being deprived of any true value"! Feeling gravely insulted the marketing businessman fires Justine from job, and then, after trying twice to break a plate without succeeding, noisily leaves the party.**

**This blogger once heard from a lady, a college professor of marketing strategies: "The marketing is the truth (she stressed the verb)."**

**It is so well known that Goebbels, Hitler's minister, had already meant the same in the phrase "a lie uttered 1000 times becomes the truth". It's good to know people like that will never take power at any universities, in which only science must prevail, and never that kind of 'truths' so valued by traders and bad politicians, named marketing. (I am not able to, or don't want, remember where I met that lady professor).**

**Back to ‘Melancholia’: feeling grievous the groom leaves the wedding and his bride forever. All other guests soon also are gone away. This first part, named for Justine, closes with the nearing of the planet Melancholia what causes strange restlessness of horses. This first  movie's part may be seen as corresponding to the first section if 'Tristan and Isolde', i.e., the 'Day': a period dominated by the complete falsehood of human relations, during which no one can any more feel or even guess the true emotions which were once spontaneous and gave origin to so many gestures everybody repeats ever since, with a growing loss of meaning.**

***"The desert grows, and woe to him who harbors deserts..."***

***Friedrich Nietzsche.***

**Let's take an example to perhaps clear our thoughts about this: once upon a time at the dawn of history someone gave a wedding party, he and/or she may have made the first suggestion that the newlyweds should together cut the first piece of cake (just an example, with no intention to be exact). And there has been great, meaningful excitement in performing such a gesture, just because it made a lot of sense for those partying people. The cheer has been so intense that many people began to propose this same gesture in other weddings. But for us, who live this third millennium, the cutting together the wedding cake has been taught as an obligation, a rigid and unquestionable action to be performed by bride and groom together. But nobody feels anymore deep emotions with this ritual, nor is anyone able to easily identify its original meaning. Our lives lost their authentic emotions, now emptied of their meanings by excessive ritual repetition of actions which once belonged to other people. So again, we have become automatons condemned to be quite apart from knowing what an authentic emotional life would be, lost since primal times. Friedrich Nietzsche, who was very influenced by Schopenhauer’s thoughts, pointed out as a major inconvenience inherent to all historical studies their unavoidable power to take from humans the beginners' ingenuity who may do their own mistakes, choose between actions and passions according only to their own tastes and experiences, being free to actually create their own lives without any advices coming from previous generations. In a poignant Brazilian popular song, named Cálice (Goblet, by Chico Buarque and Gilberto Gil), someone talks to dad's conscience. Here below is its lyrics:**

**"Dad, take away from me this goblet,   
Dad, take away from me this goblet,  
Dad, take away from me this goblet with red bloody wine.**

**Perhaps the world is not so small. Shut up!  
Nor life just a 'fait accompli'. Shut up!  
I want to invent my own personal sin. Shut up!  
I want to die of my own poison. Dad shut up!  
I want to lose your mind completely. Shut up!  
My head must lose your judgments. Shut up!  
I want to sneeze diesel soot. Shut up!  
Get drunk until someone forget me. Shut up!**

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE: The Portuguese word for goblet, 'cálice', has the same pronunciation as the imperative form 'cale-se', which means 'shut up'!**

**PART TWO: Claire**

**Justine happens to be the name of a Marquis de Sade's novel, in which the corresponding character is sister to Juliette, also a main figure. You, reader, certainly know that life and work of this eighteenth century French marquis has inspired Sigmund Freud to create the concept of 'sadism', a sexual behavior in which both erotic and aggressive impulses merge in the search for pleasure.  
In this movie, Claire is Justine's sister, married to John, the filthy rich owner of that mansion in which the wedding party takes place, a true country house whose huge golf course has "eighteen holes", about which its owner boasts so often.   
By the way, 'claire' is also the French word for 'bright', essentially an attribute of daytime. So, it may be regarded as a clue binding Melancholia to the Wagnerian opera 'Tristan and Isolde'. The automata wedding party happens at Claire's home.  
As the second part begins, Justine is coming back to her sister's home by taxi, plunged into a deep depression. So gravely downcast that without a nurse's care she would quickly starve to death.   
Nonetheless, even familial support seems not enough, what may infer by the fact that only constrained does she agree to be bathed.   
Having lost the taste sense, she no longer eats. Even Leo, his beloved nephew, is unable to cheer her up or to raise some hope in her. 'Melancholia', the wandering planet, is at this point much closer to the Sun's nearest planets (Mercure and Venus) and begins a frightening path towards Earth's orbit. Something unbelievable happens then: Justine feels a strong attraction for Melancholia's light.  
The most beautiful scene, perhaps, in this von Trier's masterpiece comes on screen: Justine taking a light bath under the mighty shine of the wanderer planet, at each day closer.   
Lying naked on a rock, Justine seems sexually aroused, her facial expression now denoting inner strength, rather than the previous scaring sadness! An enigmatic force seems to take hold of her, of a quite unknown nature: neither Eros nor Thanatos, it is must be something like a fusion of these two drives.  
[Eros is the ancient Greek god of love, driver of life.   
Thanatos, the god of death, the renewal power of the Earth, so that both divinities warrant the perpetuation of all living beings]  
Whether a fusion of Eros and Thanatos could happen, there would be no more of life on Earth nor anywhere. After that, only nothingness would remain, so the redeeming power in Wagner's 'Tristan and Isolde' would prevail.   
As the cosmic wanderer comes nearer and nearer, Claire starts to panic. Not exactly because of grieving the imminent extinction of Homo sapiens, but for her little son's fate.   
Leo, the little boy, shows his genius since capable of creating an efficient, extremely simple contraption to accurately infer whether Melancholia is then approaching or moving away from our much smaller planet.  
Surely, it would not be necessary to resurrect Leonardo da Vinci for mankind to abandon the avalanche of newly invented, speedily disposable high-technological trinkets, without which the aggressive consumerist marketing want us to believe nobody can live anymore. Using no more than two pieces of twisted wire, Leo proves how superfluous is indeed any sophisticated telescope for such a simple task, as well how nonsensical are the endless wordy controversies about Melancholia's actual path, by that time so common among the best astrophysicists.   
John, an enthusiast of the alleged wonders of the most updated technology tries to comfort Claire saying: "There won't be any collision between Melancholia and the Earth." According to him, astronomy experts, calculating planetary gravity interactions had undoubtedly demonstrated that both orbits are sure divergent.  
While Claire's husband talks about those statistical 'certainties', often mixing overt lies with some real numbers, he acts similarly to the vast majority of 2008, who a few hours before that year's September colossal crash were still proclaiming Global economy's solidly grounded prosperity.   
Economic science experts analyzed the most meticulous data gatherings about the world economy's aggregates such as supply, demand, consumption functions, credit macro curves, and so on. Enough reasons were found by them, through such a sophisticated work, to unequivocally point out a trend to a prolonged stability on this planet's economy, at least for many years.   
We, human beings, react in many ways in the face of dangers and fears brought about by sudden shakes in our safety: one among them is to keep quiet, in an introspective, thoughtful even rather depressive way. Another is to build wordy, mostly inconsistent and hollow, explanations with poor or no grounding as their support.  
John, as well as the mentioned market experts, chose the talkative way: words coming with a lot of calculus besides other mathematical tools. Well, considering their results, this may be another cue to support those, including this blogger, who consider the whole mathematics as nothing but a tool that evolved along hundreds of thousands of years enabling our minds to survive in a hostile Universe. Their mathematical formulae, elegantly explaining events still to come, failed grossly no matter how well informed by real data. In other terms, predictions failed not because they were mathematically mismanaged, rather, they failed because mathematical truths do not correspond necessarily to any objective reality outside us. It is our opinion that there is not such a thing as the often-mentioned mathematical order of Nature, a readymade structure waiting for human minds to unravel. Rather mathematics must be something related to possible paths to be taken by sense perception derived events within our minds.  
Many people committed suicide stressed, overwhelmed by false explanations to the huge asset losses 2008. Have those too savvy market experts got at least ashamed and confessed their science has a lot in common with the art of snake oil selling, after that tragic September? Or have they lost this opportunity to show not to be plain cowards like John? To Claire's mind comes up solemnly receiving the planetary collision sitting around a table on the porch, hearing classical music, and drinking the most exquisite wine. As if mankind's last moments could mimic an Italian 19th century romantic opera. Justine angrily refuses such a suggestion, which she considers disgusting like 'pure shit'. For her that would be no more than another hollow ritual, typical of a TV soap opera, without any meaning, without any bound to their authentic, deep emotions.  
According to Nietzsche times were nearing, which would be dominated by the "last human being" [der letzte Mensch], a character emerging in the terminal stages of nihilism personifying the void caused by empty life goals other than mere biological survival. Homo sapiens would then still live on Earth, but only as strictly organic machine.   
'Die Wüste wächst'; "The desert grows" is Nietzsche's mighty aphorism addressed to this so powerful trend towards nothingness, depriving human existence of a higher values and meanings. cording to Nietzsche a time was nearing, which would be dominated by the "last human being" [der letzte Mensch]. This would result from a terminal stage in nihilism unfolding, leading to the emptying of any meaningful life goals other than the mere biological survival. Homo sapiens would then still live on Earth, but only as strictly organic machines. 'Die Wüste wächst'; "The desert grows" is Nietzsche's mighty aphorism addressed to this so powerful trend to growing emptiness, depriving existence of higher values and meanings.   
In our madly consumerist times, a vast majority of people try to fill in the voids in their lives by buying superfluous things of doubtful intrinsic usefulness. The pomp of exhibiting them, the ostentation of "I can afford to buy", as a personal affirmation of class and power, makes interpersonal relations a masked puppet theater.  
Der letzte Mensch can do without contact with the reality of emotional interactions. However, these people cannot do without their ostentatious consumption, used as masks, behind which only nothingness hides.   
Departing from Schopenhauer's pessimism, von Trier's Melancholia so clearly goes to a Nietzschean perspective, since all people at that wedding may easily be regarded as "last human beings" which Zarathustra spoke about. Quite unable to carry out the jump towards the overman [Übermensch], there remains no other option for contemporary Homo sapiens.  
When interpreted this way, it becomes irrelevant whether this movie approaches humankind's end in a concrete sense, that is, as decimation by a cosmic catastrophe, or just allegorically meaning these "last humans", do not deserve being considered as from the same species as those before them, despite the genetic bounds.   
For these people there seems to be an unsurpassable fissure keeping emotions apart from real events, as if their lives were nothing but one more shallow character in a soap opera. Their existence as whole becomes something to be watched by themselves on a screen, completely deprived of any authentic emotions. Another way of not paying attention to what concerns our lives 'hic et nunc', here and now, thus staying apart from the deep roots of authentic personal choices, in other words, staying quite apart from our ability to think.   
Claire's suggestion for their last moments evokes the attitude of those who celebrates New Year arrivals watching great festivities happening elsewhere on TV, at Copacabana Beach, for instance.  
Well, why not to watch a doomsday's great show too? Nowadays, even death seems obliged to arrive as a ready-made merchandise, like a fast food lunch.  
Justine manifests extrasensory powers, one of them is to divine the number hit in the wedding lotto: 678. She then claims to have the certainty there is no living beings in the whole Universe except on Earth, adding even this will soon change, since end is quickly coming. Still in ominous tone she states human History has been always dominated by evil winners.   
Mysterious rays begin to emanate from her fingers.  
At a certain hopeless moment, Leo recalls his now dead father doom words "there is nothing to do" to avoid the planets' collision. To comfort him, aunt warns her brother-in-law John didn't consider a "magic hut". Adding that, as it is widely recognized, from a magical point-of-view nothing is impossible, there could still be some way to avoid the seemingly unavoidable final Earth destruction.   
Having decided to build a twig 'hut', under which the trio can stay closely together, so they did till the huge Melancholia planet swallows up our tiny Earth entirely.  
Could this 'magical hut' be a tiny glimmer of hope still seen by von Trier? Could we take it symbolically, as a subtle message of hope according to which our children might perhaps reverse the inexorable destruction of Earth's Nature? Maybe even by acting magically?**