

## AN EXISTENTIAL MANIFESTO INSPIRED BY ALEJANDRA PIZARNIK: AUTOGRAPHY, ABSOLUTE STYLE AND THE ANTHROPOLOGIST

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**T**he *Collins English Dictionary* (2021) defines autography as “the writing of something in one's own handwriting; something handwritten” and as “the precise reproduction of an illustration or of writing”. I use the word “autography” in another sense. I define it as a journal of existence. It does not consist of an autobiography that builds up a story of one's life, that is to say a life in a constructed form. Neither is it an auto-ethnography that concerns personal experiences of the ethnographer, with a view to shedding light on social and cultural realities. Neither is an autography a journal or notebook written by an ethnographer during his ethnographic fieldwork, specifically about his investigation. An autography is a text by oneself on oneself, written as continuously as possible, without any link to a specific field site, in the form of a journal and fragments, to understand not social facts, but one human being. Through

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this form, which is not reworked into a narrative story, it is existence that offers itself as a field for study.

There are numerous autographies by writers and artists. Here I would like to dwell on the journal of Argentinian poet Alejandra Pizarnik (2010). It effectively constitutes an autography, notes by oneself on oneself, describing or expressing one's thoughts and feelings in an exceptionally powerful way. By virtue of their intrinsic brutality, such fragments of writing possess a trenchancy that brings to the surface the thing that is said, avoiding dilution, unlike this possible effect found in narrative writings.

Alejandra Pizarnik was born on 29 April 1936, in the province of Buenos Aires. She took her own life on 25 September 1972. Pathos, of which the reflections below are not devoid, has the ability to move people, but also to attract scorn. Roland Barthes freed me from my hesitation to consider the heuristicity of pathos. Evoking the moment of Bolkonsky's death in *War and Peace*, and the grandmother's death in *In Search of Lost Time*, Barthes sees these as texts of an "absolute purity". He tells of having received these episodes as "moments of truth" that involved "a recognition of *pathos* in the simple, non-pejorative sense of the term", and he adds that "literary science, strangely enough, has difficulty acknowledging *pathos* as a force of our reading" (Barthes, 1986: 287). It is in the pathos of autographic texts like those of Pizarnik, as well as those of Pessoa (Piette, 2014), that I have found a heuristic force for conceiving the anthropological project as a science of the human being, with the idea of going as far as possible into two characteristics: the separateness and singularity of each human (Piette, 2017 and 2019).

Reading Alejandra Pizarnik's journal means being confronted with an intensity that constitutes what I call an "absolute style". Thus an autography informs on this absolute style and serves as a method for understanding it. For an anthropologist, these writings show the importance of the autography, which anyone—at least those who so desire—could understand and practice. An anthropologist can thus solicit autographies from others. And he can become himself an autographer. With

Pizarnik, the autography itself becomes an element of a lifestyle, an absolute style. As will be seen, autographic writings like those of Pizarnik help reveal the anthropologist's trade, that of the anthropologist who practices not a social anthropology, but a radically existential anthropology focused on the human entity. What will emerge is more than a profession; it is a destiny, a mission. He who, like me, could relate to Pizarnik's journals, I will call "the Anthropologist". Let's say that in this short essay it is me. The reader will allow me the tone of the manifesto.

### 1. Absolute style and autography

What is an absolute style? What are its constituents? First there is the radicality of a consciousness, a lucidity, that of "someone who sees more than others, who sees better" (Pizarnik, 2010: 57) into the world without god and without future life (p. 28), into society, whose conventions Pizarnik despises (p. 54). Hyperlucidity is also a hypersensitivity in tension with the passing of time she hates and would like to do away with (p. 28). Alejandra Pizarnik mourns her childhood: "the small chairs and small tables of my childhood room" (p. 194). Faced with others, with groups, with society in general, based on her feelings about the world, she cannot tolerate saying "yes", nor the automatic sequence of actions: "next, you'll have sore eyes, you'll cough, you'll keep smoking, you'll put off until tomorrow what you promised yourself to do last year..." (p. 111). Absolute style is an unruliness. She feels "a funeral-vigil sensation in the diaphragm" when she hears that life is beautiful (p. 92).

In an absolute style, there is also a kind of hesitation, of which stammered words can be one expression. Alejandra Pizarnik speaks of her own stammering, which she conceives as a form of her lack of desire to speak (p. 36), and of being out of sync with the rhythm of others: "That's due to that same imbalance (that lack of rhythm) that prevents me speaking correctly" (p. 137). Thus an absolute style also includes the feeling of not being with others, and an expression of withdrawal: "what makes me feel weak and stupid is sharing the rhythm of so-called 'normal' people. [...] Unlike them, I'm always so far away, at the edge of the abyss, I feel a sharp

pain when I inhale the sea, I suffer under the sun's rays, I feel like dying of sadness when I play with X's children" (p. 132). Pizarnik perceives part of herself cut off from others (p. 345). She senses that she is only conscious of herself, does not love anyone (p. 21), "looking at oneself looking, looking at oneself in the process of looking" (p. 140).

She knows she is separate from others: "I don't go out, I don't call anyone. I'm serving a strange penitence" (p. 19). Her ordinary moments seem to be permeated by a lack of pleasure (p. 80) and by her desire to die, which she feels when surrounded by people (p. 111 and p. 254). "Putting together a story, making conversation: those are sources of nausea for someone like me, who always experiences life tragically. That's my sickness. The sickness of distance, of separation" (p. 137). This feeling of withdrawal can also be that of being unwanted: "As soon as you move, as your body goes, a terrible, unchanging certainty of not being wanted in a place where others breathe their human tastes with ease and tenderness" (p. 129). Withdrawal can also be more extreme: "I've stopped washing myself every day. I've stopped cutting my hair" (p. 172).

"My heart causes me baneful suffering. So much solitude. [...]. In fact, almost everyone bores me. I feel like crying. I'm doing that" (p. 19). Hesitation becomes halting; sensitivity and consciousness intensify; separation and withdrawal turn into a painful feeling of solitude. At the same time, her lucidity is the rejection of the world she hates, and also of herself: "It is superfluous and overwhelming to be born" (p. 82), she writes, with that "I" she considers "detestable" (p. 236), so much does it burden her with consciousness of separation from people. "Everything is substitutable. Everything is replaceable. Everything can die and disappear: behind it, there are always replacements, a bit like at fun fairs, those figurines that are downed after every rifle shot and immediately replaced by others, and always still others" (p. 54).

Of that cumbersome "me", which is nothing and knows it, Alejandra Pizarnik never ceases to both observe the perseverance - "here's my life's biggest mystery: why don't I commit suicide?" (p. 78) - and plan its death,

her suicide: “Don’t forget to kill yourself. Or at least find a way to get rid of the I, a way of not suffering. Not feeling. Especially not feeling” (p. 147). It is to the highest degree that she senses only herself (p. 21), and experiences “solitude” as “total, dreadful” (p. 76).

Based on these various autographic elements, the Anthropologist could say that it is possible to pinpoint occasional fragments of an absolute style, in the life of numerous humans. The Anthropologist might also think he sees a resemblance to himself, which he wants to describe.

In the case of Pizarnik, it is not just fragments of this kind, it is a whole style that establishes coherence and continuity. Pizarnik’s style is an absolute style, a tragic way of living, characterised by a paradoxical radicality, on the one hand that of the rejection of humans and of what they do—also of her own self, which she never stops turning in upon—and on the other hand, that of the desire for love, which she seems to await, which she says she could give (p. 57 and p. 79), without understanding the resignations of humans on that subject: “This is why I’m interested in other people’s lives. Learning what makes it possible for them to live without love” (p. 153).

This is what a style is: that which, to varying degrees, permeates acts and thoughts with a consistency over the long term. She herself links her suffering, her tragic way of existing, with such a continuity, with that which creates the continuity of her existence: searching for the absolute and suffering from not attaining it. It is a transversal trait she notes several times; it is a mode that makes her continue. “I’m searching for an absolute continuity. The only continuous thing in me is that desire for impossible continuity”, while she notices changes of tone, accent and voice (p. 213).

“Sometimes I wonder if my immense suffering is not a defence against boredom. When I suffer, I’m not bored, when I suffer, I live intensely and my life is interesting, full of emotions and incidents” (p. 65).



“At least you know you don’t know what to cling to, if not that desire not to live anymore” (p. 143).

In any case, in her closure, her withdrawal, her separation, there is a human being incapable of escaping herself, ceaselessly carrying on, with thoughts or feelings that only she knows, that cannot be exchanged with any other human being. This might be obvious, but it is always useful to recall: no one can feel in someone else’s place. There is empathy, but this too is that of a person in particular, permitting echoes and reverberations, but not being the emotion of that other person, strictly speaking.

How else than by sharp, detailed autographies can one understand such experiences, especially in the details of their manifestations? From these, the anthropological investigation can extract a variety of themes. Pizarnik suggests one in particular. That absolute style, which she has preserved, is what most people have lost, though they once possessed it as infants, as she writes: “Why does the newborn not speak? Because its desires and fears are too intense, tears and wailing are ‘expressions’ of pure desire” (p. 133). Why do humans lose the absolute of the infant, its pure desire? Does this happen one day? Gradually? How have they stunned, controlled, and learned to lose the absolute style? Did they learn the world, conventions, society, and living with others? Pizarnik writes: “What makes us lose our childhood? I’m wondering when tension and inhibition arose in me. [...] There definitely was a time when I played, forgot, did whatever I wanted and allowed myself everything” (pp. 147-148).

This could be an anthropological motif: observing no longer being a baby with its pure desire. Thus, it would be up to the Anthropologist to remember himself, observe himself, make notes and also observe others, one at a time. He can also invite other people, whether anthropologists or not, to practice in whatever way possible the precision of autographic writing, consisting of self-observations, recollections and regular notes over long periods.

Pizarnik, who says she hates human beings, also knows that they deserve the observer's attention. She writes: "What a terrible, horrible wonder the human being is; what mobility and what fluidity of spirit, which makes it so that a state does not last" (p. 62). Along these same lines, Pizarnik is particularly concerned about "seeing how people go from desire to action [...]. As if all of that were natural, expected, whereas in reality, it's the opposite that should be natural" (p. 26). It is another theme: how and why does a human being carry on, carry on and continue to act: is this not the source of anthropology's basic astonishment? Once again, self-observations and self-noting are crucial for understanding this continuity<sup>ii</sup>, possibly accompanied by filmed sequences that are as long as possible – but that is another subject.

This is probably not self-evident, and the autography is thus linked to an eternal methodological question: how does one watch and how does one write? In her *Journal*, Pizarnik explicitly ponders self-watching and self-writing, close up, even very close up: "Something would like to observe and be quiet, analyse and take notes" (p. 65-66); "Feel like scribbling myself, printing my life" (p. 10); "Writing a journal means dissecting yourself as if you were dead" (p. 201); "if I could note myself down every day, that would be a way of not losing myself, of holding together" (p. 78). It is as if there were, in such an experiment, a shared affinity between the poet and the Anthropologist who is convinced of the power of that kind of note-taking. Tackling the autographic exercise, Pizarnik reflects on the methods and difficulties of note-taking. "The impossibility of reproducing my street monologues [...]. Maybe I should have a tape recorder, but no, that's no good either, setting it up, awareness of its existence would induce a strange tension in me" (p. 82). This is inevitable, with no miraculous solution, and at that same time necessary to gain knowledge of those little feelings of successive moments.

The Anthropologist is a self-noter, and is also an observer. Thus it is interesting when Alejandra Pizarnik explains that she has not succeeded in

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<sup>ii</sup> Subtle self-explicitation interviews can contribute to answering these questions (Petimengin and Bitbol, 2009; Petimengin, Bitbol and Ollagnier-Beldame, 2015).

looking at a human being, apparently by fault and also by excess: “I can’t recount, I can’t explain in detail, I saw nothing, I saw no one” (p. 103). “To look at a face as it is. Impossible if one of my gazes absents itself at the very moment when I’m looking with an excessive intensity...” (p. 98). She expresses it strongly:

“A face facing yours. Looking at it. Looking at it to avoid looking without seeing. When you look with passion, with necessity, it can happen, without you knowing it, and before you can understand it later, that you didn’t look at him. How can this omission be possible? You look, you looked, you didn’t miss any expression, any movement: you drank in that face, as only a thirsty woman like you could. You say goodbye, you go away, still invaded by that face that you looked at endlessly. But on the street, drifting and incredulous, you suddenly wonder if you’ve really just come from B’s place and if you actually saw that face. The battle with that disappearance is rough: you search all your memories. Because you know that if you can’t remember a few moments after having seen him, this implies some very long hours of searching before seeing that face in front of yours again, in reality. So with fresh determination, you go sit him down and you look again—seriously this time—until your gaze is destroyed. But that’s not how it goes. I don’t remember. And after all those hours, I wonder for the umpteenth time *what he was like*” (pp. 120-121).

The Anthropologist also knows this difficulty, but he continues: looking, seeing. It is even Pizarnik’s renunciation that comforts him in his work. The Anthropologist, eager to look at a human being, cannot forego the close and continuous gaze that I have been recommending for a few years (for example, Piette 2017 and 2019), a wholly abnormal gaze, which is not that of anyone in ordinary life. Can Pizarnik do it? The way she expresses her disgust seems prohibitive. As she herself wrote: “The impossibility of seeing others as human beings (I never look anyone in the eyes or if I do, it is to find approval)” (p. 260). And also:



“Human faces horrify me and provoke a terror in me. I really detest the human species. So why do I expect gentleness and warmth from it? Do I detest them because I’m permanently separated, on the other side? Yet that’s not what I want” (p. 269).

Continuing to evoke detailed looking and detailed note-taking, Pizarnik seems not to accept that “a narrative should be a shortcut, something incomplete” (p. 332). But in another way, she cannot tolerate expressing the trivialities and details of everyday life:

“I went to the cinema. I saw *Thérèse Desqueyroux*. What’s fascinating about fictional characters—at least to me—is their objective continuity. We don’t lose a single moment of the tragic in their condition. This is why dramatic works are made up of tragic planes, and moments of transition are skipped or excluded. Those silences make it possible to imagine that even what we don’t see and are not told belongs to the same strong and terrible substance [...]. It isn’t life that bothers me, it’s the details” (pp. 174-175).

It is the succession of moments, the opposite of the novelist’s inspiration, that the Anthropologist necessarily favours in autographic notes, avoiding the narrative story.

The Anthropologist is certain of one thing. Writing about worlds, activities, about social relations: anthropology cannot be linked with this, and existential anthropology still less. All of that is interesting, but it is a different matter. Anthropology is tragic, far from the ethnography of socialities and sociabilities, activities and events.

## **2. The Anthropologist, the poet: a lifestyle and a mission**

The ontogenesis of the loss of the absolute style could also stem from a phylogenesis: were there once humans that were less resigned, less absent-minded, more intense, more lucid than today’s *Sapiens*? In this case, the work of the Anthropologist takes a new dimension. I have put forward a

hypothesis on this evolutionary change, based on a difference between, on the one hand, the life of the first *Sapiens* and Neanderthals, and, on the other hand, the life of current *Sapiens* (of the past 100, 000 years)<sup>iii</sup>. The former would be without beliefs, marked by a strong consciousness of time and death, with social relations that were rather difficult, as if not wanting to get started and to get involved. The other way of life is that of *Sapiens* as we know it, which is broadly linked with contrary characteristics. It would be because *Sapiens* started to believe in religious ideas that they became hypolucid, veiling, attenuating, in line with what I have called a characteristic lessereity. More precisely, believing, that is to say giving one's assent to contradictory statements, implies accepting this contradiction, not thinking about it, letting it go. This is the principle of cognitive loosening. With this, *Sapiens* began a non-absolute way of life, consisting in not seeing, feeling less, accepting, trusting. The Anthropologist is like Pizarnik, sensitive and lucid in the face of human beings that are always veiling and attenuating. The Anthropologist thinks they veil too much, they attenuate too much, they accept too much, including killing. He feels he is different.

The autography is then much more than a methodological examination. It is part of that absolute style. It is a lifestyle because it requires lucidity, the opposite of the veil and the lessereity. Silvia Baron Supervielle, Pizarnik's French translator, writes in the French edition of her journal: "Jewish and Argentinian, originating from all countries and none, Alejandra comes from nowhere and cannot enter anywhere, nor escape nothingness, nor belong to anyone or anything. From Paris to Buenos Aires and vice versa, she observes herself, scrutinises herself day and night, circles herself" (in Pizarnik, 2010: 10).

Must I say it here? The autography is an essential element of my way of life, as if this self-noting had spread through my existence in the form of journals. It shows a long-standing repetition of the same things, the same feelings and, in small doses, the discovery of small differences. This was the

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<sup>iii</sup> This point is summarized in Piette (2015: 205-210)

case when, after the death of my father, as a sort of day-after-day ritual that lasted four years, I described my emotions, very gradually leading to an attenuated grief. This resulted in 700 A4 manuscript pages. Later, in parallel with the forms of my own presence alongside them, I also noted my daughters' moments and activities when they were children (reading, eating, playing, etc.), specifying how, where, when, with whom... They were notes, and only rough notes, and certainly not writing that could be called "literary". I have one hundred and three A4 notebooks (as of late 2021).

I also make notes on myself doing anthropology. It is not a field journal strictly speaking. It is a work journal. It is I myself that I make notes on, in the process of reading or reflecting. Rooted in a time and space, reading, reflection and writing are activities that I do in ceaseless succession as the days go by, like many other researchers. This daily note-taking about readings and thoughts takes a certain effort, not because I find it difficult or search for the right words, but because it constitutes a halt in the fluidity of actions, particularly reading. The aim of note-taking is to avoid losing what I have read and initially jotted down on loose sheets. It is later that I record them on a computer file. The passage of the book I have read onto the screen (I notice that I have been doing it less and less often) and also that of my day-to-day routine into my journal notebook, constitute something like a counter-movement, an unspontaneous, unfluid act. The act that is sometimes demanding does not necessarily take long, and is immediately followed by new readings, by messages, etc. I also write various clarifications directly on a computer. In that work journal, I express my resentment when I read articles that overlook my work. I note down my letter to the author of the "flaw", expressing an increasing intellectual inflexibility and rigidity. I also feel the need to record reflections on anthropology and all of the subjects that inform my work. All of this shows the preparations for books that will soon be put together. What I read and learn therefore constitutes material for continuous note-taking that mixes spontaneous ideas, critical comments (sometimes brief, sometimes systematic), comparative programmes of investigation, quotes that indicate a network of authors. Let us say that all of this describes an anthropology

in the making. All of these elements can generate an idea, a written note that will become a paragraph in an article or book, an encounter that will trigger other ideas, other actions, and so on, with my own way of realising them and appropriating them.

Thus I “textualise” time in my journals. And this expresses how time acts upon me. The journals materialise time, and in them, time imprints a certain change. Carrying out my research in this way was not really a planned, explicit decision, but the recurrence of these expressions, the worry that my work could stop tomorrow, that there is a kind of narcissistic urgency to speak, seems to me so characteristic: as an essential methodology because of what it enables to grasp, the autography becomes the Anthropologist’s lifestyle.

Like the poet, the Anthropologist searches: “Seeing and stopping to see and searching for answers in so much anonymity and lack of mystery is the peculiarity of the poet”, writes Pizarnik (p. 189). The Anthropologist can see, search, understand, and clarify as well. He does not want to give up doing it. This is his principle, what makes him hold together, him as well. What does this mean? Looking, looking at oneself, noting, being an autographer and teaching others to be autographers. The absolute style that the autographer succeeds in apprehending is not separable from the kind of radical writing that autography can supply. The autography, as note-taking by oneself on oneself, in its incisive and true form, is to the Anthropologist what the poem is to the poet.

Is this not actually a condition of the poetic work: that presence of the absolute, the dazzlement of reality, the opposite of hypolucidity? “That’s why people say to me: you’re a poet; well, you have to pay for it” (p. 159). Pizarnik says she wants to express herself “through an art that is like a howl in the dark, terribly brief and intense like death” (p. 28). In a similar vein, Jean-Pierre Richard, evoking Nerval, Baudelaire, Rimbaud and Verlaine, wrote that “their poetic adventure consisted of a certain experience of the abyss, the abyss of objects, of consciousness, of others, of feeling or of language. For them, being is lost in deep solitudes, and it is at



the bottom of that depth that it manifests itself to the senses and to consciousness. Therefore, depth is what they have to conquer, roam, tame” (Richard, 1955: 11). Mallarmé, when asked for his definition of poetry, gave this answer: “Poetry is the expression—through human language brought back to its essential rhythm—of the mysterious meaning of aspects of existence: thus it endows our time with authenticity and constitutes the only spiritual task”. In relation to anthropology, I would transpose it in this way: Anthropology is the expression—through human language linked with methods and concepts—of the existence of human beings: thus it endows our time with authenticity and constitutes a spiritual task. By “spiritual task”, I mean: essential to human intelligence (Mallarmé, 2019: 526-527). This is the radical aim of an existential anthropology.

In his speech at the Nobel Banquet, Saint-John Perse noted the importance of intuition at the heart of scientific reason, and asserted that science was not exempt from an “artistic vision”, poetry and science confronting a mystery that is “common” to both. What followed in Saint-John Perse’s speech reveals what is in fact not usually the scientist’s attitude. As an “integral” way of life, poetry consists in looking “at man walking proudly under the load of his eternal task”. It is “insurrection”, “free from any ideology”, contrary to inertia and habituation. “Faithful to its task, which is the exploration of the mystery of man, modern poetry is engaged in an enterprise the pursuit of which concerns the full integration of man” (Saint John Perse, 1960: § 8). What Saint-John Perse says of poetry, the Anthropologist would like it to be said of anthropology: that it radically confronts the human presence, is a way of life, and disobeys ideologies. He goes on to say: “The obscurity for which it is reproached pertains not to its own nature, which is to illuminate, but to the night which it explores, the night of the soul and the mystery in which human existence is shrouded” (Saint John Perse, 1960: § 12). The life of the Anthropologist stems from this absolute style: hesitation, sensitivity, lucidity, withdrawal, solitude. As an autographer, he is not someone who lives with others; he is someone who looks at incomplete relationships, his and those of everyone else, someone who looks, observes himself, writes about himself, to express that “mystery”. He does not necessarily want to practice the mixing of poetic and



what could be called scientific genres. I would particularly stress this distinction. As an autographer, the Anthropologist should be clear, conceptual and methodological, while expressing, describing and explaining the mystery in question. The autography entails the risk of appearing to work with a methodological casualness, a subjectivism, lack of seriousness, and lack of “science”, the latter presupposing the search for constants and universals. But this cannot be the case. The Anthropologist does not want to be “postmodern”. He is the conceptual-methodological poet, trying to find methods for understanding “volumes of being” as I call them, understanding all their strength, emotions, thoughts and gestures, without letting them elude the Anthropologist, as is too often the case when the volume is diluted in relations, links and situations.

The Anthropologist also strives to be an “enlightener”. He thinks he has a mission to accomplish. He does not only want to observe. He wants more, without giving in to accommodating fashions and to various doxas. He does not want to be subject to the orthodoxy of alterity and cultural distance. Today, social anthropology darkens by ceaselessly appealing to notions of “reality” or “existence” while linking them to gods or other supernatural expressions, in line with the traditional relativism of the discipline. This is particularly the case in what is known as “the ontological turn”. Finding it respectful to leave everyone to their own reality, their own point of view: it is typically human, certainly too human, too easy, almost demagogic. The Anthropologist wants to say more. The cave, the underground place, is what Plato calls the place of ignorance, that of the life of most people, who need to be educated based on what the philosopher believes is the true and the good. The cave could be, on the contrary, the place of intelligence and lucidity, the place for observers looking at humans individually—the place where one is scared, where one has taken the risk of being afraid, like Dostoyevsky’s character in the “underground”: “to be too conscious is an illness—a real thorough-going illness” (Dostoyevsky, 2005: 9). In literature, the underground is also the place of that individual who stands apart, refusing the relief of resignation, as does Dostoyevsky’s character: “I am alone and they are everyone” (p.51). It is also the place of solitude and

consciousness of separation, the place from which the Anthropologist sees people file past one after another.

And, as if in a fable, he would say to others—he would dare: that the volume of being is a presence that does not refer to anything, a presence that refers to “nothing”—as Sartre expressed it so well in *Nausea*. The Anthropologist is that volume of being in the underground, who wants to see and express reality. “Write, write” he would cry to others, asking them to cultivate their lucidity and their sensitivity, as the Anthropologist does himself. He is convinced that, for everyone, the autography is a method of lucidity.

The darkness is of course the darkness that is a human being. It is also the darkness that the researcher is confronted with when observing and trying to understand this human mystery. It is the darkness of truth as well. But the blackness of the dark can be broken up. It contains other colours, as Greimas wrote in his essay on “imperfection”: “If a painter mixes the primary colours on their palette—yellow, blue and red—they get the colour black. I’m also told that when going to a Chinese seller to buy black ink, they ask if the customer wants red-black ink or blue-black ink. The colourlessness that is black therefore *hides* an explosive many-coloured presence “(Greimas, 1987: 51). That is probably going too far. But what might it indicate? The Anthropologist then recalls that Pizarnik also “tolerates docilely” (Pizarnik, 2010 : 41), experiences moments of joy (p. 352), is capable of making plans (p. 178), of hurting herself for “trivial reasons” (p. 227), of lying to avoid hurting (p. 99), that she expects money, glory and lovers (p. 220), affection (p. 102) and the smiles of others who can make her happy (p. 66). The Anthropologist is gripped by the mystery of the presence of volumes of being, which is also his own. He is gripped by the contrast between, on the one hand, everyone’s almost optimistic veiling, their way of carrying on, everyone’s attachment to themselves, and, on the other hand, the darkness of reality. This is what fascinates the Anthropologist and tells him that a human entity is a relevant unit to explore, protect and throw light on.

Let us sum up. As Camus wrote: ‘No man has ever dared describe himself as he is’ (Camus 1970: 159). The Anthropologist has a destiny. That of looking at himself, of also looking at, describing and expressing reality. The anthropological intuitions inspired by Pizarnik make it possible to sketch the themes of an existential anthropology: everyone’s singularity with its details, its detachment from relations with others, the lucidity of the observer. In the autography, the Anthropologist discovers a methodological necessity, a way of life and also a duty: being an autographer and teaching everyone to become one. As an autographer-Anthropologist, he becomes an example to everyone: expressing singularities, learning from these and cultivating an attitude of lucidity. The Anthropologist lives solitude, describes it and thinks that the separation of humans who view themselves as separate in the dark, without realities beyond themselves, is the only ethics possible. The Anthropologist, lucid and universal, cannot conceal the truth of existence, nor deceive humans on the reality.

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