

Richard Aldrich
Enter the Mirror

The following is a selection of quotations from when, in the late '90s and early 2000s, I would write out excerpts that I found interesting. I rediscovered them a couple years back and marveled at the way they, in retrospect, informed so much of my practice of the past 15 years.

To be with the one I love and think of something else: this is how I have my best ideas.

- Roland Barthes, *Pleasure of the Text*

Likewise for the text: it produces in me, the best pleasure if it manages to make itself heard indirectly; if, reading it, I am lead to look up often, to listen to something else.

- Roland Barthes, *Pleasure of the Text*

The text is language without its image-reservoir, its image-system; it is what the science of language lacks for its general importance (and not its technocratic specialization) to be manifest. all that is barely tolerated or bluntly rejected by linguistics (as canonical, positive science), significance, bliss--that is precisely what withdraws the text from the image-system of language.

- Roland Barthes, *Pleasure of the Text*

The language I speak within myself is not of my time; it is prey, by nature, to ideological suspicion; thus it is with this language that I must struggle. I write because I do not want the words that I find: by subtraction.

- Roland Barthes, *Pleasure of the Text*

The stereotype is the word repeated without any magic.

- Roland Barthes, *Pleasure of the Text*

Since it is only with the passions of others that we are ever really familiar, and what we come to discover about our own can only be learned from them. Upon ourselves they react only indirectly, through our imagination, which substitutes for our primary motives other, auxiliary motives, less stark and therefore more seemly.

- Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*

But all this mattered little to him; he contemplated the little phrase less in its own light--in what it might express to a musician who knew nothing of the existence of him and Odette when he had composed it, and to all those who would hear it in centuries to come-- then as a pledge, a token of his love, which made even the Verdurins and their young pianist think of Odette at the same time as himself--which bound her to him by a lasting tie; so much so that (whimsically entreated by Odette) he had abandoned the idea of getting some "professional" to play over to him the whole sonata, of which he still knew no more than this one passage. "Why do you want the rest?" she had asked him. "Our little bit; that's all we need." Indeed, agonized by the reflection, as it floated by, so near and yet so infinitely remote, that while it was speaking to them, it did not know them, he almost regretted that it had a meaning of its own, an intrinsic and un-alterable beauty, extraneous to themselves, just as in the jewels given to us, or even in the letter written to us by a woman we love, we find fault with the "water" of the stones, or with the words of the message, because they are not fashioned exclusively from the essence of a transitory relationship and a particular person.

- Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*

But the plurality of worlds is such that these signs are not of the same kind, do not have the same way of appearing, do not allow themselves to be deciphered in the same manner, do not have an identical relation with their meaning. The hypothesis that the signs form for the unity and the plurality of the search must be verified by considering the worlds in which the hero participates directly.

- Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*

Now the world of art is the ultimate world of signs, and these signs, as though dematerialized, find their meaning in an ideal essence. Henceforth, the world revealed by art reacts on all the others and notably on the sensuous sign; it integrates them, colors them with an aesthetic meaning, and imbues what was still opaque about them. Then we understand that the sensuous sign already referred to an ideal essence that was incarnated in their material meaning. But without art we should not have understood this, not transcended the law of interpretation that corresponded to the analysis of the Madeline.

- Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*

The book fascinated him, or more exactly it reassured him. In a sense it told him nothing that was new, but that was part of the attraction, it said what he would have said if it had been possible for him to set his scattered thoughts in order. It was the product of a mind similar to his own, but enormously more powerful, more systematic, less fear-ridden. The best books, he perceived, are those that tell you what you know already.

- George Orwell, *1984*