

## **A Translation of the "Buch der Freunde" of Hugo von Hofmannsthal**

Man becomes aware of the world solely through that which already lies within himself; and yet he needs the world in order to become aware of that which lies within himself; to this both activity and suffering are truly indispensable.

Love and its inverse, hate, are the proper study of life because they alone infer consequences from other individuals.

Youthful intuition knows that the world submits to manifestations of strength; yet it fails to perceive the role played by weakness in its various forms.

In every person there dwells an idiosyncratic innocence.

It is a question of decisive importance whether human beings can comport themselves towards others as spectators; or whether they are invariably fellow-sufferers, fellow-rejoicers, fellow-offenders: the latter are authentic living beings.

Are we not most indigent when we are at our most secure; at our wealthiest, when we are most imperiled--and is this not the main point: to be ever in quest of new dangers; is there not a whiff of death and decay around all institutions in which life, as against the mechanism of life, is treated slightly; in public offices, state schools, the smooth functioning of religious affairs, etc.?

As a child, the individual took a sympathetic interest in his grandparents, as an oldster he participates in the hopes and dreams of his grandchildren; he encompasses a span of at least a hundred years, or as as many as a hundred-and-fifty.

One is a multiple person *qua* multiple schoolboy.

Experience must be judged in a twofold fashion, in accordance with the extent to which it bolsters self-confidence, and likewise undermines it.

Il n'y a rien qui rafraîchisse le sang comme d'avoir su éviter de faire une sottise.  
[There is nothing that cools the blood like having been clever enough to avoid saying something stupid.]

*La Bruyère*

The majority of people do not feel, they believe they feel; they do not believe, they believe that they believe.

*Diderot, Pardoze sur le comédien*

The superior man lives in peace with everyone without behaving like everyone; the inferior man behaves exactly like everyone while being incapable of coping with anyone. The superior man is easy to serve but hard to satisfy. The inferior man exacts hard service and is satisfied with trifles.

*Confucius*

Je ne crains que ce que j'estime.  
[I fear only that which I esteem.]  
*Stendhal in the preface to De l'Amour*

One must trust a person in full in order to grant him true credence in part.

A mediocre intellect is like a second-rate bloodhound that quickly catches the scent of an idea and no less quickly loses it; an extraordinary intellect is like a guide-dog that imperturbably sticks fast to the scent until he has overtaken his living quarry.

Les uns disent que non, les autres disent que oui: et moi je dis que oui et que non.  
[Some say, "Yes"; others say, "No": as for me, I say, "Yes" and "No."]  
(*Sganarelle on a difficult medical question*)  
*Molière, Le médecin malgré lui [The Reluctant Doctor]*

There is in people as much inexplicable laziness as pernicious activity at the wrong time and at the wrong place. One values as rarities those who know how to listen peacefully and attentively; correspondingly rare is an actual reader, rarest of all one who lets his fellow-creatures have an influence on him without incessantly spoiling--and, indeed, annihilating--the impression through his inner tumult, vanity, and egoism.

Youth is as strong as it suspects, and correspondingly as fragile and weak as it behaves; such is the ambiguous and demonic quality inherent in it.

To let be is harder than to enthuse.

Here lies a proof, that wit can never be  
Defence enough against mortality.  
*Tombstone of Aphra Behn, a woman friend of Pope and Dryden, in Westminster Abbey*

Our friends are not yet numerous, but they are of a sufficient number.

One may have attained the age of sixty without having the foggiest notion of what a character is. Nothing is more obscure than the things we are forever going on about.

In per-ception is a primordially active meaning, as in per-formance and per-fection; but it is no longer heard by anyone, and out of it we have fashioned a pure passivity.

Hebbel says somewhere that one easily transfers one's respect for the element wherein a given person excels to the person himself. He says it specifically in connection with Adam Müller and Gentz, but thereby hits upon a more general truth.

Hundred thousand-eyed Argus was a man without an occupation, as his name attests. Hence, no praise is due to the spectator in virtue of the fact that he is a better judge of a few things than are those under his hands; nor is any shame due to the latter, for having

improved their grasp of the observations of a loafer.  
*[Johann Georg] Hamann to his brother in 1760*

Very few people have ever truly desired anything in their lives, for even an instant; the number who have truly loved is no greater.

A course of instruction will be the more successful the more its individual phases assume the character of experience.

Bismarck (in those days Ambassador in Paris) allowed the (to him) unknown Paul Lindau to express his esteem via a successful translation of “désarmer” into the neologism “abrüsten”. Later on, for the very same reason, he sent him the *Oeuvres de Frédéric le Grand*.

The potter hates the potter, the builder the builder; the beggar shuns the beggar, and the singer the singer.  
*Hesiod*

One has rather fewer friends than one supposes, but rather more than one knows.

Upon contemplating the course of time, one ultimately comes to regard nothing in human affairs--no alteration, no reneging, no self-contradiction--as impossible. What holds us all together, our shared human condition, which discovers itself in everything, is by far the most powerful of these non-impossibilities.

The doer does not become unclean through the deed; only the deed through the doer.

The formation of the infant mind is the most important thing: to protect it so that the divine is revealed in our proximity. But much that we do and allow to happen thereafter tends to kill this mind through rigidification.

On ne s’imagine d’ordinaire Platon et Aristote qu’avec de grandes robes et comme des personnages toujours graves et sérieux. C’étaient d’honnêtes gens qui riaient comme les autres avec leurs amis: et quand ils ont fait leurs lois et leurs traités de politique ç’a été en se jouant et pour se divertir. C’était la partie la moins sérieuse de leur vie. La plus philosophe était de vivre simplement et tranquillement.

[One does not ordinarily imagine Plato and Aristotle except as perpetually grave and serious characters in long robes. And yet they were decent men who laughed like others with their friends; and when they devised their laws and their philosophical treatises it was with the greatest of ease, and for the purpose of entertaining themselves. That was the least serious part of their life. The most philosophical part consisted in living simply and tranquilly.]

*Pascal*

All satisfaction in life is founded upon a regular recurrence of exterior things. The alternation of day and night, of the seasons, of fruits and flowers, and whatever else confronts us year after year, which we can and ought to enjoy--these are the authentic

mainsprings of earthly life. The more amenable we are to this kind of enjoyment, the happier we feel.

*Goethe, Poetry and Truth, Book 13*

He who grows old perceives that one remains consistently guilty throughout all of life's relations and concatenations of circumstance; yet there also dwells in every person his own form of innocence; it is this that allows him to keep his chin up; he does not even know how.

The breathtaking fact about lovers is that they know their own strength.

Situations are symbolic; it is the weakness of present-day man that he treats them analytically and thereby liquidates the magical.

What makes Aladdin great is his wish that his soul has to covet an essence. And if I were obliged to make an objection to a masterpiece on this score, it would be that it does not stand out strongly or distinctly enough, that Aladdin is a legitimated individuality, that to be able to wish and wish, to wish impertinently, to seize the moment resolutely, is insatiably to covet a genius as great as another. Perhaps one does not believe it, and yet in each generation there are born perhaps not even 10 youngsters who have this blind courage, this grasp into the infinite.

*Kierkegaard*

Mirabeau *qua* lover, like Mirabeau *qua* politician, is a splendid, ravishing sight, and would not have been one without the other.

Circumstances have less power to make us happy or unhappy than is thought; but the anticipation of future circumstances in the imagination [has] an immense one [i.e., a power of this kind].

Il n'y a rien de violent à Paris comme ce qui doit être éphémère.

[There is nothing violent at Paris like that which ought to be short-lived.]

*Balzac*

Old habits are so hard to contend with because in them sloth—which otherwise thwarts every action—enters into an alliance with a steady, rhythmic sense of activity.

We are so hell-bent on possession and so overjoyed at every sign of attachment that we are capable of taking something akin to pleasure even in the regular recurrence of a fever.

The nearer a person comes to the other, the less he is able—unless he sees him with the eyes of love—to find him logical in his actions and consistent in his feelings, and the other pays him back for that. In point of fact there is no consistency except among the productive.

I can only superficially bring the people over to my side; one can win their heart only by sensually delighting them—of that I am convinced, as sure as I live.

*Lichtenberg, Observations on Mankind*

A man who dies at the age of thirty-five is at each point in his life a man who will die at the age of thirty-five. This is what Goethe called entelechy. *Moritz Heimann*

No one knows himself, inasmuch as one is only oneself and not additionally and simultaneously another person. *Friedrich Schlegel on Lessing*

People in relation to other people are always simply comical; tragedy ensues whenever the fate of the solitary individual joins in [the drama] and conceals itself behind his antagonists.

How unthinking one is vis-à-vis that which affects others. For example, the fate of a great singer who loses his voice in his early years is an unthinkable hardship. He possessed what made him exalted above all others and accepted along with them. He loses it in a single blow, and what remains behind is an empty husk that will perhaps roam the earth for another thirty or forty years.

People are often the slaves of their whims, even in themselves; but it is astonishing how seldom they know how to determine their wills.

The case histories of illnesses recorded by [Pierre] Janet make it manifest that the power of belief declines in tandem with the diminution of the strength of the will. Here lies the root of the higher destiny.

C'est un malheur, que les hommes ne puissent d'ordinaire posséder aucun talent, sans avoir quelque envie d'abaisser les autres. S'ils ont la finesse, ils décrient la force; s'ils sont géomètres ou physiciens, ils écrivent contre la poésie et l'éloquence; et les gens du monde qui ne pensent pas que ceux qui ont excellé dans quelque genre jugent mal d'un autre talent, se laissent prévenir par leur décisions. Ainsi quand la métaphysique ou l'algèbre est à la mode, ce sont des métaphysiciens et algébristes qui font la réputation des poètes et des musiciens; ou tout au contraire; l'esprit dominant assujettit les autres à son tribunal et la plupart du temps à ses erreurs.

[It is unfortunate that men cannot ordinarily possess any talent without having some desire to abase other people. If they have finesse, they disparage force; if they are geometers or physicists, they write against poetry and eloquence; and people in society, who do not think that those who have excelled in some domain can be poor judges of another talent, allow themselves to be informed by their decisions. Thus when metaphysics or algebra is in vogue, it is metaphysicians and algebraists who make the reputation of poets and musicians; or vice versa; the dominant spirit subjects the others to its tribunal and most of the age to its errors.]

*Vauvenargues*

A steady, rather delicate, [and] transcendent vanity is an element without which we would be unable to live. Like a curved mirror it shows us a universe of which we are the

life-giving center; without it, we feel that we ourselves would be ejected, worldless, into the darkness.

I had none but divines to call upon me, to whom I said, if my ambition could have entered into their narrow hearts, they would not have been so humble; or if my delights had been once tasted by them, they would not have been so precise.

*From a letter of the Earl of Essex, written shortly before his execution*

C'est la profonde ignorance qui inspire la ton dogmatique.

[The tone of dogmatism is inspired by profound ignorance.]

*La Bruyère*

Quite a number of people are still perplexed by him (Wieland), because they imagine that he who is complex must be complacent and that he who is resourceful must be capricious. They do not consider that the notion of character refers only to the domain of the practical. Only in what a person does, carries on doing, perseveres in doing, does he show character, and in this sense no one has ever evinced it as strongly in his own person as has Wieland.

*Goethe*

The yardstick of propriety lies near reality.

In every individual character resides something that does not allow itself to be broken—the skeletal framework of character; and trying to alter this framework is always tantamount to teaching a sheep to fetch a stick.

*Lichtenberg*

"Letting someone be" and "having faith in someone" are the notions of a separated pair of watchmen.

Without self-love no life is possible, not even the most trivial decision, nothing but desperation and numbness.

Napoleon during the Battle of Ligny to two young staff officers who were laughing and chatting behind his back: *Soyez donc sérieux devant tant de braves gens qui s'égorgent* [Come now! Be serious in front of so many decent people who are having their throats cut].

Every generation may have had sound principles that it held to be of preeminent importance; but it is not in the nature of the economy of life that these principles should necessarily have been automatically transferred to the succeeding generation via the consciousnesses of single individuals, let alone via the whole.

*Tempus divitiae meae, tempus ager meus.*

[Time is my riches, time is my field.]

*Goethe in a letter to Fritz von Stein*

There are as many kinds of twenty-year-olds or fifty-year-olds as there are kinds of friends, lovers, or fathers.

Le suffisant est celui en qui la pratique de certains détails que l'on honore du nom d'affaires, se trouve jointe à une très grande médiocrité d'esprit.

[The self-satisfied man is he in whom the practice of certain details honored by the name of business is conjoined with a massive intellectual mediocrity.]

*La Bruyère*

The suggestions of egoism are not to be translated from within or from without. They are codes for which there is no universal key.

A certain quantity of arrogance is a salutary ingredient of genius.

Menogenes, Pompey the Great's cook, looked as healthy as Pompey the Great himself.

*Lichtenberg after Pliny*

There is a peculiar thing about fame. A thicket burns because it contains fuel for a fire, and a person becomes famous because fuel for the spreading of a reputation is available in him. Fame refuses to be sought out, and all pursuit of it is futile. Of course, anyone can make a kind of name for himself through shrewd conduct and all sorts of contrived means. But the central gem is missing from it, thus it is worthless and does not survive a single day. It is the same way with the goodwill of the people. He—Carl August—did not seek it and by no means did the public any favors; but the people loved him, because they felt that he had sympathy for them.

*Goethe to Eckermann*

Libertas est: qui pectus purum et firmum gestitat.

[Liberty is he who is in the habit of bearing a pure and firm conscience.]

*Ennius*

What is the most fundamental element of rank? Naivety. The most imposing person without rank is slightly terrifying. Napoleon. The former: Il n'y a qu'un pas du sublime au ridicule [It is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous], granted, but only for him; it was in the nature of his sublimity to be ever on the verge of a tumble.

Women have a delicate organ for catching the clear scent of fame like a heavenly perfume.

Je trouve plus poli d'admirer que de louer.

[I find it more polite to admire than to praise.]

Madame de Grignan to Madame de Sévigné

It is a different matter whether one actually has an attitude, of whatever sort, or whether one affects to have one, in front of others or even in front of oneself.

A noble, magnanimous man who believes that one ought not to be noble, who stifles his own liberality entirely out of a sense of duty, is quite conceivable.

Qui nulli exstiteram, dum vita manebat,  
Hac functo aeternam sit mihi terra levis.

[As I counted for nothing in weighty matters when I was alive,  
May this earth forever weigh lightly on me now that I am dead.]

Quotation by [Justus] Möser in the *Patriotic Fantasies*

A kind of unrelenting, indirect approval [of the other person] is an ingredient that social intercourse can never do without; direct approval is harder to tolerate: he who directly utters his approval of us thereby allows it be understood that he is presenting himself to us from a [higher] rung [of the ladder, or,] at the very least, from a position that enables him to take us and our deserts in at a glance.

He (Captain Blifil) began to treat the opinions of his wife with that haughtiness and insolence, which none but those who deserve some contempt themselves can bestow and those only who deserve no contempt can bear. *H[enry]. Fielding*

There is but a negligible and superficial difference between the short-lived and negligible fame won by the actor and the “everlasting fame” won by the poet.

Judgment of an old woman of the people on Lessing: Ne, smoket hat he neg, wän he man süs wat dogt harre! (No, he did not smoke, if only he had been of any use otherwise!)

*Carl Julius Weber*, Letters of a German Traveling in Germany

Authority over oneself is a sign of higher humanity.

Un homme partial est exposé à de petites mortifications; car, comme il est également impossible que ceux qu’il favorise vivent toujours heureux ou sages et que ceux contre qui il se declare soient toujours en faute ou malheureux, il naît de là qu’il lui arrive souvent de perdre contenance dans le public, ou par le mauvais success de ses amis, ou par une nouvelle gloire qu’acquièrent ceux qu’il n’aime point.

[A partial man is vulnerable to small mortifications; for, as it is equally impossible that those whom he strongly favors should always live happily or wisely, and that those whom he declares himself against should be always in the wrong or unhappy, whence it arises that he often loses his composure in public, either on account of the bad luck of his friends, or on account of some new glory attained by those whom he thoroughly detests.]

*La Bruyère*

Ego-tism transgresses not so much through deeds, as through non-comprehension.

With regard to the concept of “experience” there are two irksome sorts of people: those who lack experience, and those who pride themselves too much on it.



Precocious children and callow old men are sufficiently present in certain world-situations.

It is an irksome but necessary art to keep oneself away from common people through coldness. "Only coldness subdues the muck and keeps it from besmattering your foot," says an Arab proverb.

It is not enough to utter only truths; it is furthermore necessary not to say everything that is true; for one ought to bring into the open only those things that it is profitable to reveal, and not those that would only do harm without bearing any fruit; and hence, as the first rule is "Speak truthfully," so the second is "Speak discreetly." *Pascal*

He who interprets the social in any but a symbolic sense errs.

Women betray much that they in other respects keep secret through their couture, wherein nothing, however trivial, is ever unpremeditatedly included or omitted, even by the poorest maidservant. From this fact, beginning lovers, who do not know them from Eve, have had to discover many things for themselves.

Vanity lodges in the starting point in the same fashion as in the appointed goal.

In spiritual matters young people often wear a wig, albeit one woven from their own hair.

Valmont: Voilà bien les hommes! Tous également scélérats dans leurs projects, ce qu'ils mettent de faiblesse dans l'exécution, ils l'appellent probité.

[Valmont: There you have men in a nutshell! Scoundrels all alike in their projects; what they carry out half-heartedly they call probity.]

The terribleness of guilt consists in its imputation of a colossal authority to the greatest evil on earth, to terror.

Although empirically speaking almost all particulars have an unpleasant effect on me, the whole has a complementarily pleasant effect when one finally attains the consciousness of one's own presence of mind.

*Goethe, Travels in Switzerland, 1797*

Zola n'était pas un méchant homme, mais il vivait sous l'influence des événements.

[Zola was not a wicked man, but he lived under the influence of events.]

*Cézanne in conversation*

Partial self-hatred underlying all perversity.

There are many kinds of love; the most celebrated one is not the one most widely adopted. *Rudolf Pannwitz*

Allegory is a great medium that should not be despised. What is mutually actual between friends is sooner clarified by way of a bartered magic ring and magic horn [i.e., an exchange of a magic ring for a magic horn?] than through psychology.

The butcher in Kaschau who feels so gay, so happy on his wedding day, that he--before he enters the bridal chamber--has the strongest oxen led thither and professionally slaughtered in order to give vent to his emotions.

Can anyone know the worth of men  
Who has not endured heat and cold in the world?  
*From the Turkish Mirror of Kjatibi Rumi*

Allez en avant et la foi vous viendra.  
[Go forward and faith will come to you.]  
*D'Alembert*

There is such a thing as inconsequentially long hair; but time and again, Absalom's long hair will be the death of him.

The disaster that befalls you at some time or other comes from a moment that you have let slip. *Napoleon*

One considers that repeated moral reflections do not merely sustain the living present, but even more so constitute an ascent towards a higher life. *Goethe*

"She who is dead and sleepeth in this tomb  
Had Rachel's comely face and Leah's fruitful womb,  
Sarah's obedience, Lydia's open heart,  
And Martha's care, and Mary's better part."  
*A woman's epitaph by Shakespeare*

At the beginning of life one is at one's most subjective and least comprehends the subjectivity of others.

Women are born French nationals in virtue of their partiality to moderation and their proneness to extravagance.

Only a middle-aged man can utter flatteries with dignity.  
One way of educating ourselves is to challenge someone who has authority for us to express his opinion on a subject that we are certain he judges differently than we do. [But how can we be certain that he judges it differently if we have never heard him express his opinion on it? (DR)]

Every significant new circle of acquaintances produces disintegration and new integration.

Nothing gratifies our vanity more than when somebody to whom we owe [i.e., for whom we feel?] a great deal of esteem says with conviction that he does not understand such-and-such a thing.

The stupidity of the clever, the crudeness of the cultivated: where do their roots lie? In an unbridled appetite for emulation.

Snobs read memoirs of the salons of the *ancien régime* as children read fairy tales: with all five senses.

In their handling of everyday situations calling for tact, vis-à-vis the social world, Germans always vacillate between neglect and excessive refinement.

He who in his commerce with people observes their manners lives off of interest, he who disregards them sticks to his principal.

A young man on the stairs at the opera house, having been repeatedly jostled from behind by an elderly gentleman, gave the latter a box on the ears. "What will you say, sir," cried the old man, "when you learn that I am blind!" --*Beaumarchais*

The reluctance ever to speak of one's most particular circumstances is a self-warning of the heart; consumption effortlessly insinuates itself into every confession, into every description, and the most delicate, most ineffable circumstance is transformed in the twinkling of an eye into the vulgar.

Attentiveness and love are mutually dependant.

It is a fiction to speak of a European aristocracy in general terms; in point of fact, an Austrian count, a Prussian junker, a Roman prince, a Polish nobleman, a [British] lord and a Bernese patrician are extremely dissimilar creatures: but one can and very well should speak of a European aristocracy as a postulate.

A young Ionian entered Athens wearing a purple gown with gold trimming. Someone asked him where he was from, and he replied: "I'm from money." *Athenaios*

Good breeding of the robust patrician sort consists in refusal.

Anecdote: The Wealthy and Beautiful Widow and the Three Freemen. On a cold night, as the three gentlemen are departing by sleigh after a supper at her house, the question: Has Lord Peto got his coat? Whereby she reveals which of them she prefers. Love's classical music is in the major mode; its romantic music, in the minor.

Modern love is short on melody, over-orchestrated.

In the higher forms of intellectual communion, as well as in marriage, nothing ought to be taken for granted [or, more literally, “fixed” or “set in stone {i.e., “granite?” (sorry!)(DR)}], or even as a given; rather, everything ought to be taken as the unique bequest of its own separate, world-encompassing moment.

Lust loves the means, not the ends.

The rules of etiquette, properly understood, are a guidebook even to the life of the mind. Austrian peasants, when they want to be friendly and courteous and neither “Du” nor “Sie” seems appropriate, address their interlocutors as “Wir.” My grandfather still [addressed] me thus when I was a child.

De toutes les passions, celle qui est la plus inconnue à nous-mêmes, c’est la paresse; elle est la plus ardente et la plus maligne de toutes, quoique sa violence soit insensible. [Of all the passions, the one of which we are most unaware is indolence: although its violence is imperceptible, it is the most ardent and the most cunning of all of them.] --  
*La Rochefoucauld*

There are not two people on the earth who could not be rendered mortal enemies through a devilishly contrived indiscretion.

The consoler brags lightly.

The problem of family life consists in this, that people are expected to become to everyone passably their right from different character and different periods of life through a common style of living.

Beloved people and sketches of possible paintings.

There is nothing more uncommon in the world than will, and yet the meager quantum of will allotted to human beings suffices to overturn all their prejudices.

Tous les vices à la mode passent pour vertus.  
[All fashionable vices pass for virtues.]  
*Molière*

The social world can and may be understood only allegorically. Here [in allegory] the entire social world of the modern age (from La Bruyère and Madame Sévigné onwards) may be comprehended as a single great mythology.

There are as many individuals as there are encounters.

The renunciation of a mistress bespeaks a flagging imagination.

Every significant new acquaintance takes us apart and puts us back together. It is of the greatest significance, so we undergo a regeneration.

Visitors to Athens, after a few days spent in familiar conversation with Plato, ask him to lead them to his namesake, the famous philosopher.

Les plus grandes choses n'ont besoin que d'être dites simplement: elles se gâtent par l'emphase. Il faut dire noblement les plus petites: elles ne soutiennent que par l'expression, le ton et la manière.

[The greatest things need only be simply spoken: they are spoiled by emphasis. The most trivial must be spoken nobly: they endure only by means of expression, tone, and manner.]

*La Bruyère*

Children are amusing because they are easy to amuse.

In superior human beings there are a productive and an unproductive form of indolence, and they flow together into a region that eludes the eye [of the observer], a region seemingly without clear borders.

What love stimulates in fits and starts is plastic energy. Hence in love as in art are there so many abandoned sketches absent the energy requisite to their execution.

Ce qu'on fait simplement, est simple à faire.

[What one does simply is simply {i.e., easily (DR)} done.]

*Wladimir Ghika*

Vocal music is miraculous because it consists in domesticating what is by default an organ of unbridled egoism: the human voice.

In certain circumstances a woman will tolerate a man's withholding his love from her and granting it to another [woman], but the emphasis [of the act] must inhere entirely in love [itself] and not in the beloved.

There will always be a Philenon or Manon Lescaut for every situation; but the Aspasia is seldom in sufficient supply; here [i.e., in the "Aspasia" case], a strong feminine nature needs must be found out by an uncommon spirituality [or "alcoholic content"! (DR)], but such a one that never acts by its own hand, never absents itself from the game of sensual attraction, but implicates the entire world in this game.

He who yearns for spring may not gaze at the walnut tree.

Degas, to the question: Pourquoi est-ce que vous faites les femmes si laides, monsieur Degas?—Les femmes sont très laides, madame. [Why do you make your women so unattractive, Monsieur Degas?—{The} women are very unattractive, madame.]

God fram'd her so, that to her husband she  
As Eve should all the world of women be.

*Sir Thomas Overbury,  
Epitaph of a wife*

People of our muddled epoch experience their own actuality through interstitial experiences, unexplained misunderstandings, productive fits of absent-mindedness.

He who sees himself being recognized is beginning either to love or to hate.  
*Rudolf Pannwitz*

The meaning of marriage is reciprocal dissolution and palingenesis. A true marriage is therefore dissoluble only by death, nay, not even by that.

Agreement in the absence of sympathy yields a repugnant liaison.

In family life the air should be kept permanently clear by means of a consistently light-hearted treatment of the weightiest matters.

Manners rest on a double foundation: [that of] showing every consideration to others, and [of] not obtruding oneself upon [them].

He who pursues love vigorously is as weakly capable of feeling it; he importunes the world with the lack that is within him and laments afresh his lack of opportunities. The spiritually defective know each other by sight and smell.

When someone mentioned to Kapellmeister Schwanenberg, a friend of Salieri's, the rumor that Mozart had been poisoned by the Italian, S[alieri{?}]. replied: "Non ha fatto nulla, per meritar tal onore. [He did nothing to merit such an honor.]"

Les hommes sont si nécessairement fous, que ce serait être fou par un autre tour de folie que de ne pas être fou.

[Men are so necessarily mad that a complete about-face of their madness would render them mad rather than sane.]  
*Pascal*

Self-love and self-hate are the most profound of terrestrially productive forces.

André Chénier being driven on the tumbrel to the Guillotine, and smiting his forehead: Il y avait pourtant quelque chose là dedans [There was something, however, there indoors. {i.e., something roughly equivalent to "Did I forget to turn the gas off?" (DR)}]

Marquis de P., on being asked after the Restoration what he had done during the Revolution: J'ai vécu, monsieur, c'est bien assez. [I lived, monsieur; that is quite enough.]

Friendships and love affairs is [i.e. are each] a rough sketch of marriage, the first of its intellectual side; the second of its mystical side.

There are such excellences within us that never materialize as accomplishment in our own eyes, and that further become palpable to us [only] in the world's reaction to [/with] them; and yet these are of the greatest value, and to be conscious of them would quicken the circulation of our blood; to gather and reflect back these rays is the most tender office of friendship.

Seen from within, the old man is eternally a youth.

While they are accepting and relinquishing their ideas, people communicate as by kisses and embraces; he who accepts an idea, receives not something but rather someone.

The soul of a friend who has died at the height of his powers is suspended over one's remembrance of him as if over a waterfall; with living corporeality it plunges downward time and again; it seems to be atomized and vaporized for the sake of climbing back up to the summit and throwing itself off again.

There is an autumn stillness [that lingers] well into the season of colors.

Is solitude still of any value in the world of individuality? Intrinsically, no, except in the midst of [other] people.

*Rudolf Kassner, Number and Aspect*

Ce que j'aime le mieux au monde, les feuillages, n'existent plus et je souffre de tout mon coeur au milieu de ces paysages de pierre.

[What I love best of all in the world, the proliferation of leaves {or, more quasi-literally, "leafscapes" (DR)}, no longer exists; and I suffer with all my heart in the midst of these landscapes of stone.]

*Charles Louis Philippe*

Music unites, customs divide. Out of unity emerges people's friendship for one another, out of division their mutual respect. When attains to great significance, there is negligence. When customs too strongly prevail, estrangement emerges.

*From the book Jo-Ki (a book about music)*

[Der Dichter is nie in seiner Sache ganz. Der Fachmann immer.]

*[Joseph] Addison*

Joy requires more devotion, more courage than sorrow. Joy enjoins one to submit, precisely so far [as/in order] to defy the darkness of the unknown.

Anecdote: a man who led a very shady life in his youth (Alphonse Karr, I think). At a dinner with friends, his mistress said: *Voyez comme ce sourire embellit Alphonse; comme il est jeune, ce sourire.*--*C'est qu'il a si peu servi*, he said. ["You see how this smile enhances Alphonse, because it is a young smile." "That's because it has served so little," he said.]

In the physiognomy of children there is a finality that is perceived only by the paternal or maternal eye.

Death itself to the reflective mind is less serious than marriage.

[Der Tod selbst is für den, der nachdenkt, nichts so Ernstes wie die Ehe.]

*W[alter]. S[avage]. Landor*

It befits strong faith—and, hence, genius—to apprehend such love as it is offered.

The present is the absolute aspect of existential suffering—and yet only a last resort.

The soul is never wholly assembled, except in delight.

In the meanest and most hidden crannies, comporting themselves in the most extraordinary and solitary fashion, everyone has thousands of comrades of whose existence he is totally unaware.

J'aime toutes les choses, mais j'aime surtout ce qui souffre. D'une belle jeune fille et sa grand'mère, je préfère la grand'mère parce qu'elle est vieille, qu'elle souffre, et qu'elle va bientôt mourir. Je préfère la grand'mère parce que, comme je te le disais, mon cœur s'est habitué à vivre dans une haute atmosphère où il y a surtout de la bonté. Il y eu, tout l'été dernier, une aïeule qui installait sa chaise au soleil en face de mon bureau, en haut des marches de la rue Francois-Miron, elle chauffait son pauvre sang froid et son visage et se cheveux blancs. Une fois sa petite-fille est venue près d'elle jouer, l'amuser, l'agacer. Oh! Mon ami, il fallait voir les gestes de defense de la vielle. Elle ne riait pas, elle se défendait de ce mouvement, avec un recul de son corps et de ses membres et une crispation de son visage. C'était pitoyable. Mon cœur en saignait de tristesse, de bonté, et de bonheur.

[I love everything, but I especially love that which suffers. Between a beautiful young girl and her grandma, I prefer the grandma because she is old, because she suffers, and because she is going to die soon. I prefer the grandma because, as I told you, my heart has accustomed itself to living in a rarified atmosphere in which, above all, there is kindness. There was, all during last spring, a grandmother who would set up her sun chair facing my office, at the top of the steps of the rue Francois-Miron, she would warm her poor cold blood and her face and her white hair. One time her granddaughter came by her side to play, to amuse her, to annoy her. Oh! My friend, if only you could have seen the old woman's defensive gestures! She did not laugh, she forbade herself that movement, with a contraction of her body and of her limbs, and a tension of her face. It was pitiful. It made my heart bleed for sadness, for kindness, and for happiness.]

*Charles-Louis Philippe*

When a person is gone for ever, he takes a mystery with him: how it was possible for him--and only him--in a spiritual sense, to live.



Where is your self to be found? Always in the deepest enchantment you have met with. Georg Büchner on his deathbed had, in his delirium, by turns, a revolutionary countenance, in between which intervals he was heard to declare, in solemn tones: "We do not have too much, we have too little of it [i.e. pain], for through pain we are received by God. We are death, dust, and ashes--why are we suffered to complain?"

\*

God said: Him who does good I will reward tenfold and more; he who does evil will find his reward when I do not forgive him; and he who would draw nearer to me by a span I will go twelve yards to meet; he who walks to me I will run to; and before him who appears before me full of sin but faithful I will appear, fain, to forgive him.

God said: I was a treasure that no one knew, and that would fain be known. Therefore I created man.

An hour of meditation is better than a year of praying.

Striving for knowledge is a divine commandment for every believer; he who spreads knowledge among the unworthy hangs pearls, precious stones, and gold about their necks.--*Mohammed*

Every truly great spiritual phenomenon is superhuman and renders everything [else], for him who submits to it, excessively superfluous until the end of time; this is the root that revealed religions and of their demand for orthodoxy through an individual.

Those who feel little coherence within themselves discourse out of their adherence to ideas. Ideas are nothing to which one might in any sense adhere; they are an ulteriority that reveals itself to us in the most exalted moments and then goes back into hiding.

Man is full of designs; he does not recognize them, but they are the secret mainsprings of his existence.

Everything invented in which you have participated as living being is mythical. In the realm of the mythic each thing is conveyed through a double meaning that comprises its opposite meaning: Death = life, a combat with a dragon = a loving embrace. Hence, in the realm of the mythic, everything is in equipoise.

--thirdly: the inner landscape, that delivers the soul from its antenatal situation into the world, that determines the essence and color of the dream, of the dream in its broadest sense, as the aggregation of secret and unconscious shortcuts of the spirit that are its native clime, its proper homeland. The inner landscape is by no means to be understood as a formation composed of fantastic "seas" and "mountain-ranges," "caves," "parks," and "jungles," the paradisiacal ideal of callow yearning, the subterfuge of and refuge from every inadequacy of the present moment; it is, rather, the crystal of real life itself,

the place where its precepts are dictated, and where its actual destiny is begotten, a place of which the successive deflections of so-called actuality are perhaps merely a reflection.--*Jakob Wassermann*

The spiritual interiority of a person is ultimately transformed into a labyrinth of chiseled adamant, of which he alone believes he knows the way out—but he only believes he knows.

One cannot demand to know everything; but, rather, [while] for the sake of knowing of one thing to know of everything.

Mind seeks out reality, mindlessness clings to unreality.

So divinely is the world ordered that everyone, in his position, place, or time, considers everything superfluous in the same light.--*Goethe*

In the present that surrounds us there is nothing less fictitious than in the past whose reflection we call history. While we are interpreting the one fiction by means of the other, there emerges some small something that is worth our pains.

The good alone is worthy of note in the long run.  
*Immermann*

It would be hard to say what a thing is, but one can say that men are in agreement about it and have set no limits to the concept of what is fully tangible.

Do not fill your head; but, rather, fortify it.—*Lichtenberg*

Ever astonishing, reality comes rushing in whenever the rational necessity for the substantiation of a *fait accompli* is insufficient.

The sole identity capable of withstanding a profoundly penetrating gaze is the identity of contrareity.

The mystic grants pride of place to devotion, irrespective of both good and evil alike; but evil lacks the power of submission that the good alone possesses.--*Moritz Heimann*

The masses scorn the solidity of the world,  
In which [scorn?] their proneness to objectivity betrays itself...  
*Theodor Däubler*

The eagle cannot take wing from level ground; he must laboriously leap from a boulder or tree-trunk: but thence he ascends to the stars.

Si la pauvreté est la mère des crimes, le défaut d'esprit en est le père.  
[If poverty is the mother of crime, lack of mind is its father.]  
*La Bruyère*

Five destinies guide mankind: his spiritual nature, his body, his people, his homeland, his epoch: above all five of these must be elevated the divine.

Every strong impression brings freedom and restriction: out of these we form our impressions.

No purpose is served by the individual's placing himself in a spiritually subordinate position; the whole of the present age, all of the past comprised by it, [occupies] precisely the [amount of] space that it requires in order to exist.

Everything already lived through smacks oddly and horribly of brackish water: death and life commingled.

Only the distressed comprehend what spirit is.

Magic is wisdom grown practical. Even instinctive wisdom can grow practical. (For [=für, an Anglicism?] ordinarily only the practical growth of the understanding is made use of).

Every superior entity exacts synthesis. The superior man is the union of several men; the superior poem requires several poems in one in order to be brought forth.

Of our thoughts the will has a far greater share than the understanding.

[just]--as the sublimity of twilight and night, wherein shapes combine, is so easily begotten, on the other hand it is [equally easily] banished by the day, which separates and isolates everything, and so must it be [banished], if it is not happy enough, by every crescent form, and take flight to the beautiful and enter into an intimate union with it, thereby rendering both [itself and beauty] alike immortal and indestructible.

*Goethe*

We ought to worship God because he can be revered only in the spirit, which is innermost core of the essence of the human. *J. B. van Helmont*

From the same cause whereby something overflows from nothingness into being, a poetic creation finds its place. *Plato*

An isolated action or event interests us not because it is explicable or probable but because it is true. *Goethe*

We ought to be able to develop our faculty for posing genuinely deep questions through intuition [alone] to a degree that such questions would be answerable in our meetings with our fellows; nay, even in the anticipation of such meetings.

How many forces may there be of whose existence we have not so much as an inkling; for there is no connection between ideas that we apprehend by means of our five senses and those that we might apprehend by means of other senses.

*Lessing*

The world wishes to tear everyone from, and restore everyone to, himself.

Knowledge [in general] is slight; in the right context knowing is a lot; in the right spot, it is everything.

La bêtise n'est pas d'un côté et l'esprit de l'autre. C'est comme le vice et la vertu; malin qu'il les distingue.

[Stupidity is not on one side and cleverness on the other. It is the same as with vice and virtue; only a smartass {*Excusez-moi!* (DR)} distinguishes between the two.]

*Flaubert*

God gives us a soul; but genius we must acquire through education. [Consider a] boy whose full range of spiritual powers one constantly develops and amplifies as much as possible in any set of circumstances; a boy whom one accustoms to compare everything that he adds every day to his little store of knowledge with what he already knew yesterday; a boy whom one likewise teaches to ascend effortlessly from the particular to the general, as well as to descend from the general back to the particular: this boy will become a genius if anyone can become anything in this world.--*Lessing*

One counts as thirty thousand to me, but the innumerable as nothing.

*Heraclitus*

People will not always understand you; and those who maintain that they are closest to you will most unqualifiedly disown you; I can see into the future; then they will cry: "Stone him!" At present, when your own inspiration is nestling against you as against a lion and watching over you, the rabble will not venture to attack you.

*Bettina [von Arnim] to Goethe*

The spiritual evinces its greatest strength corps-à-corps [with] the sensual.

He who grasps the highest unreality will shape the highest reality.

There must be a star on which last year is the present year, on which the last century is the present century, on which the present age is the age of the Crusades, and so on; everything in an unbroken chain; thus eternity stands before one's eyes, with everything [mutually] juxtaposed like flowers in a garden.

Spirit conquers matter. Matter's most powerful weapon in the struggle is its transience.

There is nothing essential in one's spiritual interior that is not simultaneously observed in the external world.

Every idea gives birth to itself through its opposite: royalty in financial distress, be it Frederick II, be it Louis XVI; now spiritual power through the exhaustion of military, technical, [and] economic matériel.

One can possess within oneself [both] a dull and an acute sense of time; likewise [both] an efficient and an impotent sense of space.

One must get over one's sense of the present as in music [one gets over] hearing the timbres of the instruments.

To be sure, a great nation is constantly bringing forth new poets and thinkers who represent its spiritual essence; but the majority of these are objects of this spiritual life; only the tiniest minority are subjects thereof.

A thing is an inexplicable [unausdeutbare] implication [Deutbarkeit].

The clever and the stupid scholar are both dangerous: the stupid one increases the amount of material dead weight in the world under the pretext of intellectual activity; the clever one [too] effortlessly sacrifices the highest [gifts?] to [the] inferior [end/purpose?].

I think myself along with the secondary [thought-about object], be it the map of Greece; thus, I see into myself as if through a window.

Strong fancy is conservative.

Throughout our lives, especially in the sphere of intellectual commerce, we are in the bad habit of lending what is properly our own to other people as if we had absolutely no choice but to do so. And because they in turn disclose to us what belongs to them, our attempt to shape the two parts into a unity begets full-fledged monstrosities akin to those that are produced in a house of many corners by the light of a lantern, and that consist half of shadows, half of real objects. There is no more useful, but also no more arduous, operation than the repayment of this unconscious debt to the phenomenal world of the other person. By means of this repayment we in the first place make comprehensible human beings out of them [sic (I believe that the intended referent is "the other person," and that the pronoun should therefore be "him") (DR)]--or, to put it [more] simply: a person believes he understands people when to a suppositious, unlimited analogy to himself he adds other analogies that flatly contradict this self. The object of experience is to be able to deal with people whom one has imagined as radically different from oneself.

Rien est simple de ce qui s'offre à l'âme, et l'âme ne s'offre jamais simple à aucun sujet. [There is nothing simple in whatever addresses itself to the soul, and the soul never addresses itself in simple to any topic.]

*Pascal*

To ripen is more sharply to divide, more intimately to unite.

Perhaps the curious contiguity of the real and the unreal is the actual calamity that gives rise to false notions.

The average man cleaves fast to accurate conceptions; whence the world's numerous half-truths.

“Unspiritualized intellection” is a perfectly serviceable conversational term for the spiritual situation of the present as instanced by its innumerable pamphlets and ephemeral monographs.

Embryos have the features of giants but not their strength.

Philosophy is the lady judge of [every] age; things are bad when its expression [stands] in its place.

What is civilization [Kultur]? To know what concerns you and to know what it concerns you to know.

Toute débauche parfaite a besoin d'un parfait loisir.  
[All absolute debauchery demands absolute leisure.]  
*Baudelaire*

One must be allowed to preoccupy oneself with one's own intellectual character when the impulse to do so is guided by genuine curiosity.

To behold the strange is to impede strangeness; to discern the familiar is to forestall familiarity.

When one juxtaposes Wieland's conception of antiquity with Nietzsche's, and likewise Winckelmann's with Jacob Burckhardt's, one realizes that perhaps we more than other nations treat antiquity as a magic mirror from which we hope to receive our own shape in an alien countenance purified [of all imperfections].

That we might overrate the past, it has been embodied in our memory.  
The present admits/acknowledges yonder where thou receivest thy form.

On Oeser: His works were always in a brooding vein and derived their unity from the notion that art and workmanship would thenceforth be impossible.  
*Goethe*

Inquiry into human physiognomies is spirit: assertions are assertions of matter/the material.

As one perceives so one would be perceived.

[Even] in the most fully spiritualized [person/phenomenon] it is still naivety, irrational corporeality, through which the spiritual perdures.

Of our own thoughts we see only the next patch, as the shortsighted see that of the level path before their eyes, without seeing whither it is leading [them: namely], to the

opposite slope of the vale.

The mouth kisses, eats, and talks--cleaves to all things tangible for its own sake--in order that we should be brought starkly face to face with the intangible.

If one were capable of knowing how many homogeneous masses (to which end one measures electrical and magnetic phenomena), the material world comprised, one would also be capable of knowing the sum total of all possible senses. *Lessing*

The nearer the scholar or the thinker approaches the artist without actually reaching him, the more dubious a phenomenon he is.

The most dangerous sort of stupidity is an acute understanding.  
Man understands everything but absolute simplicity. *Grillparzer*

Only between non-existent entities is there such a thing as similarity--as between, say, the human and the non-human. The existent is always peerless.

Spirit is overwounding reality. That which absents itself from reality is not spirit.

Flashes of insight are true children of the creative moment, and they resemble their father in face and physique; indeed, they perpetuate his memory (a memory of what has utterly vanished).

La ressource de ceux qui n'imaginent pas est toujours conter.  
[Storytelling is the constant refuge of the unimaginative.]  
*Vauvenargues*

General knowledge is remote knowledge. It is in particulars that wisdom consists and happiness too [...]. But he who enters into and discriminates most minutely the manners and intentions, the characters in all their branches, is the alone wise or sensible man, and on this discrimination all art is founded.

[Generelle Kenntniss ist entfernte Kenntniss, das Wissen besteht aus Einzelheiten, ebenso wie das Glück. Nur wer auf das genaueste in die Manieren, die Absichten und die Charaktere in allen ihren Verzweigungen eindringt und sie unterscheiden weiß, ist der einzig weise und vernünftige Mensch, und auf diese Unterscheidung ist alle Kunst gegründet.] -- *William Blake*

Worthy ideas must bear scrutiny even from behind.  
*Novalis*

Perspectivism: The use that we make of the truths of other ages is a counterfeit that meets its analogue in post-Cartesian mathematics.

Generally speaking, even to see one must wipe one's eyes clear of the sand that the present is constantly throwing into them.

Kant, Fichte, and Hegel are in a real sense the expression of a disequilibrizd bourgeois world.

Not to know much but to bring many things into contiguity with each other is one of the rudiments of creativity.

In asserting anything whatsoever regarding reality, one brings it closer to dreams [,or], rather to poetry.

Out of pure voids is the plenitude of human existence constructed.

The best moments are those in which the individual attains clarity regarding his situation vis-à-vis existence; the sensation may attain a truly magical intensity, and it is totally devoid of egoism and striving.

He who has spirit is obliged throughout his life to dissolve himself into his constituent elements; from these, genius constructs a new world.

Marvelous is that passage from one thought to the next that makes it possible for us to almost joyously to contemplate our own particular bogeymen.  
Events are waves that menace spirit but also carry it along [in their wake].

What is inner freedom? Recognizing the general and the indispensable in the particular.

St. Anthony of Padua, just before his death, upon seeing that one of the friars was calling for the administration of extreme unction, said to him with a smile, "I have already been well oiled within."

*De la Haye, Vita di S. Antonio*

Belief, like unbelief, has only one object. Both aspire to the whole.

Serpens nisi serpentem comederit non fit draco.

[A snake that has not devoured other snakes will never become a dragon.]

The feeling that he is material for something greater is the last [consolation] that remains to man when he repudiates himself.

Depth must be concealed. Where? On the surface.

The world tolerates scoundrels, but only extraordinary people satisfy it.

The in-between have a difficult time and the easy burden of a guilty conscience.

Simple characters, not complex ones, are hard to understand.

The most dangerous of our prejudices prevail within ourselves against ourselves. Their dissolution is the creative act.

Reality stays always the same near. Reality is always associated/connected in the same



way.

The most dangerous adversary of strength is weakness.

It takes a whole life to perceive how thingishly, objectively, things behave; and how humanly, subjectively, human beings do.

It was not through the categorical imperative, which is always on everybody's lips, that Kant exerted such a powerful influence on generation after generation, but rather through his criticism, in which the shyness, the worldlessness, of the Germans found its abstract expression.

Forms [give life/animate] and kill.

Even this forms part of inner freedom; the youth in us must be swept away by the grown man, the grown man by the old one, the maiden by the woman of middle age: there is only one priest at the shrine.

All that is living is fluid, but fluidity is not the form of life.

*Rudolf Pannwitz*

Even the perception of differences between ourselves and others requires a moment of elevation.

There is an enthusiasm [arising] from weakness and another [arising] from strength; the first is akin to sentimentality, the second is opposed to it.

The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.

[Der Weg des Übermaßes führt zum Palast der Weisheit.]

*William Blake*

A firm will is the aim; in one in whom the will is strong, striving is successful. Strong of this will is he who to the question, "Who can well, if he four infinite chronological orders and hundred thousand ages was martyred throughout in a hell, still hope to be someone waking up?!" is able to answer "I." *Sārasangaho des Siddhahatto. Twelfth Century.*

He who does not recollect the good does not hope. *Goethe*

Even in suffering the pious soul will stick to his post, even in the [most] desperate moment.

If love has a *purpose*, transcendently speaking, it must consist in this: that in its glow of permanence, suffusing his innermost parts, disintegrating man is annealed into a unity.

That the abundance of moral possibilities inwardly manifests itself to him in shapes rather than in concepts is what distinguishes one who has entered the temple of education from one who is still tarrying in its vestibule.

Be cautious in six instances: when spoken to, speak the truth; when something speaks to you, hold on to it; discharge your debts; be chaste in your thoughts and actions; shun every authority; and flee all evil.

Be as silent as possible, and thereby remain of good cheer.

Unworthy of the pious is all empty prattle.  
*Mohammed*

When the will alone bestirs itself, something has almost already been attained.

A feather can polish a pebble into a sphere, provided that it is guided by the hand of love.

Among all poisons the soul is the strongest. *Novalis*

The modes of pain are as various as the degrees of willingness with which it is received. There is an elevated experience of pain as well as a debased one.

Creation and description, although usually lumped together, are antitheses; their true unity is only in worship. *Rudolf Pannwitz*

Ceremony is the spiritual work of the body.

Through faith life first becomes for life [/comes to life], even in its most delicate joints [/nerves and sinews].

A work of art is an intricate and extensive plot through which a character becomes recognizable.

The beautiful, even in art, is unthinkable without shame.

The spirit can be harmonious and the body without deformity—and yet fail [to be] a true spirit of the body.

Old wine is more than an old man and recovers the bouquet that hovers over it, [and] which was less than a child: unborn.

\*

The present imposes forms. The creative consists in escaping from this charmed circle and securing other forms.

Within the narrowest confines, in the most peculiar occupation, there is more freedom than in the limitless utopia that the modern mind imagines as freedom's playground.

Intelligent Germans [/German intellectuals] are born arduously and tardily into real life; they then undergo a second birth, of which many [of them] die.

Hic libertatem nostri posuere parentes.

[Here our parents placed? liberty.]

*Swiss epigraph*

The big city exists in history for the achievement of great extrinsic purposes: for the care and maintenance of certain civilizations that otherwise would perish; for the fostering of passive segments of the population that, left to the mercies of the small town, would atrophy; for the peaceful cultivation of great collective forces. --*Jacob Burckhardt*

As far as the city is inwardly concerned, it does not originate through the abdication of individual egoisms; rather, the city is *this* abdication, it *is* the equilibrium of that abdication; such that the greatest possible number of interests and egoisms thereby find the settlement of their accounts and ultimately and fully interweave their own existence with that of the city.--*Jacob Burckhardt*

A thought that does not easily occur to anyone, but of which many possess the key, is the following: in every epoch, under the mask of especial strength is hidden a pseudo-especial weakness.

Humanity attains new creations with ineffable difficulty and therefore cherishes its previously developed forms as a sacred heirloom. Therefore Caesar with worthy deliberation connected himself to Servius Tullius [in point of similarity of style], as Charlemagne subsequently connected himself to him, and Napoleon at least tried to connect himself to Charlemagne. *Theodor Mommsen*

A brief victory celebration is, if truth be told, but [an interval] between two long periods[/epochs] when it is condemned as a paradox and despised as a triviality. *Schopenhauer*

If the Germans now wish to [be] include[d] in politics [obedience to current cant probably demands "the political process" here—DR], they must first of all learn to separate two concepts, the first of which appertains to what is nearest, the other to what is highest: purpose and aim.

The despair of an epoch would be to express itself merely [in itself], [would be] if it no longer seemed worth its trouble to compare itself to the past.

In the current delirium elements of every species of German absurdity since the sixteenth century are circulating.

It befits the most radiant destiny of a people, to have a unique and rhythmically governing natural dispensation at the core of its essence. It was thus for the ancient Egyptians of the Nile. They received benediction, bread, myths, legal instructions, and

the rhythm of life from a [single] charitable hand. Hence were they so grave and merry as none have ever been since, and overcame death through life and vice-versa.

The administration of nature has been a strong ingredient of our civilization for the past hundred years.

Fleeting is the present among the peasantry. The peasant and the present are engaged in a wholesome eternal quarrel, and over nature and the stars there hovers a colorfast age that knows nothing of the insipid present.

National mysticism is the reflection of the self, [transferred] to a totem.

One's knowledge of the nation to which one belongs is as paltry and erroneous as that of one's own body.

From time to time the people enforce a kind of ostracism; when they make certain classes and professions the object of an accusation, they thereby point to a higher truth: only the totality of productive persons constitutes the people.

Les institutions périssent par leur victoire.  
[Institutions perish by their victory.] *Montesquieu*

All national politics ultimately lead to an immediate elementariness, to idiocy [/idiom], to the word understood in its [most absurd] non-sense.

Pierre le Grand a marié la Russie à l'Europe, de là votre Malheur, dont voici le gémissement eternal: Nec sine te nec tecum vivere possum.  
[Peter the Great married Russia to Europe; whence your misfortune, whose eternal complaint {is}: I can live neither with you nor without you.]  
*Joseph de Maistre*

The joy of becoming acquainted with bygone ages has a more sensual motive than we would imagine; it is with this as with tourism.  
Nations speak such mutually distinct languages that they are incapable of offending or satisfying one another.  
Nations impress one another by means of their basest characteristic as distorted in a fairground mirror.

Greeks make the most from one tiny nest-egg, Germans the least from the most colossal treasury.

Anthropocentrism is also a kind of chauvinism.

The wit of the French is a surprising [and] agreeable way of trenchantly expressing a truth. The German greatly errs when he assumes and maintains that the former give wit pride of place over truth, that underneath [their] wit [only] untruth or nothing is

concealed. So [i.e., apparently, according to the Germans?] Voltaire intended in his witticisms on God and the church; so must Rodin's retort be understood: *The German barbarians, in ravishing [sic!--DR] the Cathedral of Reims, are doing to it exactly what French restorers do every single year to every single cathedral in France.*

It is easy for us to take in at a glance the awkward absurdity of an antiquated epoch from the ancient documents that in those days served the "times," did homage to them, reveled in them; and our gaze is diverted [therefrom] by a spasm of nausea. But how will we feel when the cataract of the present, with all of its hustle and bustle, is pierced, and by degrees our eyes begin to see; when we behold the same inconceivable insipidity, childish futility, and ineffable irrelevance in operation—nay, the total interchangeability of our philistine contemporaries with the reactionary or the tutored and untutored louts of the eighteenth [century]—and the whole thing, like a stagnant body of water, seems to surround us, an immortal swamp that no sovereign will ever drain! *Excerpt from an obituary on [Richard] Dehmel*

Germans take great pride in profundity, which is only another word for unrealized form. According to them, nature was obliged [/If they had their way, nature would be obliged] to pass us around without a skin[/skins], [as/in the form of] wandering chasms and whirlwinds.

The philosopher—in the archaic and eighteenth-century sense of the word—has as good a position in a great epoch as in a minor one: in both he will cut a distinguished figure. But an epoch that nullifies itself also nullifies him.

Ages succeed one another. What was for one an achievement, is for the next an insipid truism. He who does not comprehend his own age has played a bad hand.

The state's most urgent need is a single courageous government.  
*Goethe*

The moral victor is he who leads himself in triumph to death with the lightest heart.

Cabinets wish to deceive each other; political machines wish to be driven against each other until one smashes the other to pieces. Fatherlands do not collide with each other in such a fashion; they lie peacefully side by side and support each other. ["]Fatherlands against fatherlands in mortal struggle["] is the most pernicious barbarism of human language. *Herder*

Every people occupies as much of the world as it can intelligently acquire for itself. The Germans in the Middle Ages and the Imperial Romans.

Insofar as the state is concerned, the form of its government is of but very slight significance, although half-educated people think otherwise. That great aim of statecraft should be endurance, in that the latter is far more precious than liberty. --*Machiavelli*

Modern Italians perhaps have greater difficulties in coming together, spiritually

speaking, as a nation, than do the Germans; they have not yet even reached the point of being collectively able to recognize the problematic of their national existence; which recognition requires a deeper reflection than they would be capable of today. Here southern Italy, the homeland of philosophical thought, will have a great role to play. It is no accident, and a far from trivial fact, that thinkers from Thomas Aquinas and Giordano Bruno right on through to Giambattista Vico, Galiani, and, finally, Benedetto Croce, have all hailed from the southern half of the peninsula.

In [the notion of] the national, idiosyncrasy holds sway; everyone believes he has knowledge of a terminus in the nation, as he believes he has knowledge of a terminus in himself. But if one were to ask him what this was, he would answer like Augustine to the question on the essence of time: if I am not asked what it is, I know it; but if I am asked, I do not know it.

The eighteenth century had a genuine popular philosophy, in whose place the nineteenth has installed a witch's [brew] of all imaginable ideas and opinions. To re-distill from the latter something higher and precious for the [present] age, would appear to be the duty to which the present generation must submit.

In former epochs the affectation of sentiment prevailed; in the present one the affectation of realism does.

Antiquity has no figure more pathetic than Hannibal. Forsaken and betrayed by the people [in whose name] he acted, he was ultimately obliged to abandon them [in turn] to his mortal enemies; to set down his image for the millennia; and notwithstanding [this, he] has become immortal.

En politique, les grand créateurs ne sont pas ceux qui conçoivent, ce sont ceux qui exécutent.

[In politics, the great creators are not those who conceive but those who execute.]  
*Vandal*, L'avènement de Napoléon [The Advent of Napoleon]

Vanity makes the eyes of the French clear and their world meaningful and noteworthy.

The German's vanity does not lie so close to his skin, but [is] a more distant, external part; [and] so he modifies objects through it instead of [modifying] his [direct] relations with them.

The intuition of the ubiquity of the past is a German [sixth] sense, a gift of the mighty, dormant German essence.

Politics is the art of intimacy on a higher level.

Politics is a consensus about the real.

Every relic of emperors and empire stirs me when I behold it. This government was the only one that rested on purely spiritual and peaceful foundations. *Immermann*

Much is not ventured because it seems difficult; much seems difficult only because it is not ventured. --*Kaunitz*

In politics one must regard nothing as impossible, for a skilful man can accomplish [anything]. *Kaunitz*

The German has a colossal practicality and a dwarfish relationship to things.

Every epoch has its own sentimentality, its way of overcoming certain strata of feeling. The sentimentality of the present is selfish and loveless: it exaggerates not love but self-love.

The Germans have little aptitude for the theater, but a great deal of theatricality; little sense of or appreciation of rhetoric, but a great deal of exaggeration; little predisposition to the social, but infinitely many societal restraints.

The French posit the social, the world of reflexes, as the absolute reality that no one could be so absurd as to doubt.

A class that has ruled in the state must either be annihilated and reduced to the mere shadow of itself, or it will cause harm.

The state is an alliance between the preceding generations and the succeeding ones and vice-versa. *Adam Müller* [after Burke?—DR]

The great consistency of their history is the bronze pedestal on which the self-esteem of the English rests.

That from a single character like Wagner, at bottom a showman in the grandest manner, a conflict could originate, a conflict that is tearing apart the entire culture [/our entire civilization] and even today is nothing less than allayed, reveals a prominent aspect of the German spiritual character: that in the domain of the spiritual for them, as for the Greeks, divisions and classifications count for nothing.

The first principles are always the same—how are we after all to distinguish the people of our time [from him whom time has ordained to be our comrade {There seems to be in here some pun on “Zeitgenosse” (“contemporary”) that I cannot make out—DR}]? “Zeitgeist” in a good sense is a breath of pure fresh air—in which eternity flutters past.

At their most spiritual the French have straddled the border between Catholicism and heresy.

A rearward approach to money matters is perhaps the [basic] sense of the moral and even religious revolution in which we seem to be situated.

Les journaux sont les cimetières des idées. [Il se traduit, n'est-ce pas?—DR] *Proudhon*

It is hard to struggle with a governing elite, but harder to be under the obligation of postulating a[n as-yet] nonexistent one.

At a pinch it is possible to imagine what bygone ages have kept locked up in their thoughts, but not what they kept locked out of them.

The vanity of the Germans, in virtue of the poverty of their social life, has perverted itself into self-righteousness and sentimentality.

A Viennese pronounces the name of a foreign painter in the way he believes he has heard it pronounced by cultivated people; he mingles with the painter's compatriots, he corrects his pronunciation according to their example, he returns to Vienna and broadcasts his correct pronunciation, adapts himself to the incorrect one. All of this half out of politeness, half out of an aversion to running roughshod over resistance. A Prussian pronounces the name incorrectly; he mingles with the people who pronounce it correctly; when he notices the difference, he nevertheless sticks to his pronunciation, and he will give the other one an impatient glance whenever the name turns up; indeed, he will perhaps pedantically insist that he pronounces the name as it is written—hence, correctly. Strength and weakness in one.

Politics is magic. He who can summon forth its powers is obeyed by them.

We must generally seek to disentangle the expression *happiness* from the life of the people and replace it with some other [expression], while we have to retain the expression *unhappiness*. *Happiness* is a profanity, a word abraded through common usage. *Jacob Burckhardt*

If my own age would fain revile me,  
I'll calmly let it have its say.  
I hail from other ages entirely  
And hope to dwell in one such age someday.  
[Cf. the meter of the original (it's not any more regular)—DR]  
*Grillparzer*

\*

Every authentic work of art is the foundation of the only temple on earth.

As regards the fundamentals of education Goethe can do duty for an entire civilization.

We have no modern literature. We have Goethe and [some] saplings.

It is the paradox of literary existence that the present readership's craving for other fare passes for transcendence of the present.

Every representation of an existence is already [an] indiscretion; to atone for this primary *vitium* through a counteraction that one cannot only term religious is the



meaning of every higher endeavor in art.

For one who is productive there is no more serious test than [that of] recognizing whether that which compels and warns him from one step to the next is his true genius or the timid voice of his inadequacy: whether he, while he is securing his form, is yielding to [what is] highest or [what is] meanest [within him].

The highest productions of poetry are vouchsafed a kind of religious function; the diversity of methods by which this can be established is shown by Goethe's symbolic poems and Dostoyevsky's novels.

Painting transforms space into time, music [transforms] time into space.

People demand that a literary work speak to them, address them, lower itself to their level. The highest works of art do not do this any more than nature lowers itself to the level of mankind; she is there and leads mankind forth [over/about herself] –if he is [collected] and ready [for this].

Goethe says of his novels [that] their style is “polite intimation.”

The poetic mission is the purification, organization, articulation of the stuff of life. In life monstrous absurdity, a dreadful welter of material, prevails—in the form of heredity, inner compulsion, stupidity, depravity, the profoundest baseness—in the intellectual domain an absentmindedness, inconsistency well past the point of incredibility—this is the Augean stables that time and again craves to be cleaned and transformed into a temple.

An author, whether he wishes to or not, always struggles with the whole age he lives in. He learns to feel all resistances of the epoch, but he will never in his lifetime come to know whether the weight that threatened to crush him to death was [made] of ice or of paper.

Racine était un romantique pour les gens de son temps. Pour tous les temps il est classique, c'est-à-dire parfait.

[Racine was a romantic for the people of his own age. For the ages he is classical; in other words: perfect.]

*Delacroix*

The difficult thing in life is that in human beings reason and passion cohabit and [that] one must, in the best of circumstances, overproduce [?=übereinbringen] them in oneself. This selfsame difficulty inheres in poetic representation: [that of] producing a fine blending of the passionate with the rational.

*Daphnis and Chloe* translated by Courier: There is an admirable mid-day clarity in this representation. It is of the highest mildness; all shadow becomes reflection. Which artist actually yet understands this? *Goethe*

No one is by nature less of a psychologist than the novelist. He considers his characters universal and his situations unique.

Formal affinity: of Dostoyevsky's novels with Greek tragedy; of the arithmetical in Kleist and in Poe; of Novalisian intuition of life with the same intuition in Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky.

Spirit and structure in the work of art reciprocally authenticate each other.

*The German [reading] public:* At bottom completely indifferent to all form, and only full of an insatiable thirst for content, even the more refined public demands nothing of the artist but an interesting individuality.

*Friedrich Schlegel*

There exist nowadays almost no other means of making an impression on people and living sociably in the world in a higher sense than the merely private conversation and reflection therein. *Solger*

What prevented Ibsen from making comedies out of his material was a Nordic-Protestant inflexibility and unsociability.

The fifty-six-year-old Goethe reminded a visitor of the Belvedere Apollo, a peacock, and the ruins of Heidelberg Castle; all at the same time.

*Biedermann, Conversations with Goethe*

The famous author merely lives in a different form of obscurity than the author whom no one speaks of.

With the intellectual products of an epoch, the most prominent excepted, nothing is really yet done; something must first have been done.

Every [artistic] theme leads at every point into the infinite.

Is not the despair of the present age its unrealized faith in form?

Le poète est celui qui émuet: il y a deux manières d'émouvoir. Peindre parfaitement des choses capables de donner une très petite quantité d'émotion, alors on la leur fait rendre toute: La Fontaine peignant la belette ne pouvant sortir du grenier. Peindre plus ou moins bien une chose capable de donner une très grande quantité d'émotion: Voltaire peignant la position de Mérope et ce qu'elle fait dans la tragédie de ce nom. Je crois que si je lisais attentivement (et avec ce sentiment du mauvais et du faux dans les sentiments, très exercé, en poète) Mérope et la fable du pauvre bûcheron tout chargé de ramée, les quinze premiers vers de cette fable me donneraient beaucoup plus d'émotion que tout la tragédie.

[The poet is he who moves: there are two ways of moving. {By} perfectly depicting things capable of yielding a very small amount of emotion, so that one makes them render their all: La Fontaine depicting the weasel not being able to get out of the

granary. {By} depicting more or less well a thing capable of yielding a great amount of emotion: Voltaire depicting the position of Merope and her actions in the tragedy of the same name. I believe that if I read Merope attentively (and with that feeling of bad and of false feelings much exercised {by the poet}) alongside the fable of the poor woodcutter all {laden with} foliage, the first fifteen lines of this fable would yield me more emotion than the entire tragedy.]

*Stendhal*

The greatest respect that an author can have for his public is that he should never produce what is expected [of him], but rather what he himself regards as proper and useful as matter for his own education and for that of others. *Goethe*

Grillparzer and Hebbel must have so badly misunderstood each other because while both being head and shoulders above their epoch, they took opposed stances to it. Hebbel, as the northern German, wanted to conquer it spiritually and bring it to its fulfillment; Grillparzer, as the German oriental, wrenched himself free from it. Ultimately, Hebbel seemed almost a journalist to Grillparzer; the latter, a dilettante to the former.

The artist gives the most content in the work and in his [circle of acquaintances] when he gives the most form and nuance.

One must emulate nature insofar as she knows no connecting links, no trivial matters, no makeshift[s], but rather treats each thing as the main matter at hand.

What is termed plasticity in poetic representation, the actual shaping, has its root in justice.

The quality that a minor man of letters knows at least to esteem in a great one, because he is so utterly unfamiliar with it, and indeed, has not even an inkling of it, is tenacity, the sheer dogged will to greatness.

In dilettantism is the seed of a moral corruption.

The chief difference between actual people and invented characters is this: that it costs poets every effort to impart coherence and inner unity to their characters; whereas people may persist in their incoherence even to the last extremity, since, after all, they are held together by the laws of physics.

What to the ordinary spectator is already form is to the connoisseur mere material; authentic aesthetic pleasure issues only from the loving, totally abandoned preoccupation with the work of art, from the quest for its spiritual form, of whose existence the ordinary spectator has at best an inkling. *Otto Ludwig*

Grillparzer was of the curious opinion that a poem composed in prose should be regarded as only half a poem.

Modern psychological poets plumb the depths of what ought to have been skipped over,

and grasp superficially what needed to be profoundly apprehended.

Talent is not performance; arms and legs are no dance.

On peut traduire et indiquer les choses les plus subtiles en appliquant ce vers de Boileau:

"D'un mot mis en sa place enseigne la pouvoir."

Il n'est point besoin du vocabulaire bizarre, compliqué, nombreux et chinois qu'on nous impose aujourd'hui sous le nom d'écriture artiste, pour fixer toutes les nuances de la pensée; mais il faut discerner avec un extreme lucidité toutes les modifications de la valeur d'un mot, suivant la place qu'il occupe. Ayons moins de noms, de verbes et d'adjectifs au sens presque inaisissables, mais plus de phrases différentes, diversement construites, ingénieusement coupées, pleines de sonorités et de rythmes savants.

[The most subtle things may translated and indicated by the application of this line of Boileau:

"Power had something to learn from a properly placed word."

There is no need of the bizarre, complicated, copious, and Chinese vocabulary that is forced on us nowadays under the name of artistic writing in order to fix all the nuances of thought; but one must discern with an extreme lucidity all the modifications of the value of a word according to the place that it occupies. We [once] had fewer nouns, words, and adjectives in an almost imperceptible sense; but more different sentences, diversely constructed, ingeniously cut, full of sonorities and of skilful rhythms.]

*Maupassant*

The spirituality of a work of art consists not in what it says but to whom it says [it].

*Moritz Heimann*

At the highest level subject-matter nakedness, self-undressing, prevails; its counterpoise is the highest seriousness, absolute fulfillment. Where this state of affairs intermits, an eye outwardly blinks, is shamelessness.

Modern painters set store by charm alone; and charm is precisely what great art strictly precludes.

*Müller-Hofmann in conversation*

The fact that Goethe knew little Greek and never saw an actual Greek sculpture with his own eyes is curious food for thought.

The fact that they depict the soul of a young man in the deepest shades of melancholy renders the aphorisms of Novalis so bewitching.

The beautiful alone can be

The theme of our love;

Great art is only to take leave of its subject-matter.

*Wieland*

Elle était pleine de grace pour se mettre au lit, pour se déshabiller. J'aurais voulu qu'un Albane la vît alors, pour la dessiner.

[She was full of grace in placing herself on the bed, in undressing. I would have wanted an Albano to see her then, in order to sketch her.]

*Napoleon on Josephine*

L'étude du beau est un duel où l'artiste crie de frayeur avant d'être vaincu.

[The study of beauty is a duel in which the artist cries for mercy before being beaten.]

*Baudelaire*

What is Hogarth and all caricature other than the triumph of the formless over form?

*Goethe*

Painted visions of fantasy have nothing to do with the possible; the legitimate object of higher painterly fantasy is the human body.

Every spoken word presupposes a listener, every written one a reader: to be simultaneously occupied with these [two facts] is the hidden but heavy burden of literary performance.

That we have a word such as *grace* [*Grazie*] gives us the possibility of reserving the word *Anmut* [*grace*] for more elevated and rigorous diction. The French, it should be said, also have foreign words and very nicely express shades of meaning with them; e.g., *inclination* alongside *inclinaison*.

Characters without plot are lame; plots without characters, blind.

Turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. Last glimpse of nature by the heart: Novalis. First glimpse of the economic through the eyes of the spirit: Immermann.

One used to hear the word longing [*Sehnsucht*] ad nauseam among the Germans; now it seems as if vanished for decades.

Every poem that does not exaggerate is true; and nothing that makes a profound and enduring impression is an exaggeration.

*Goethe*

The authentically poetic steers equally clear of callousness and sentimentality.

The difficulty of writing in today's newspapers is this: that one does not know whom one is addressing [/with whom one is talking]. (Formerly one knew, if not the individuals, then at least the circle, the class or group, by their education or opinions.)

Philologists forget that we are capable of [conversing with/talking to{/with}] Goethe, of whetting our judgment in the truest sense through [/on] the productions of the present; journalists, on the other hand, miss the insight that for the moment nothing of higher significance can be wrested from the moment, and the further insight that succession, ranking, classification, is everything, and the individual phenomenon actually nothing.

What must be good, must always be *like*, for *like* is the most divine of all categories and deserves to be honored, as in Roman parlance, *ex templo*, because it is the starting point of the divine in life; what does not happen like-wise is of evil origin. *Kierkegaard*

In the current literary scene one can go farther through conversation than through publication.

Nowadays perhaps more teaching comes from Goethe's prose epigrams than from all the German universities combined.

Most people, when applying themselves to so-called intellectual pursuits, such as reading and writing (not writing letters, but writing as an author), do nothing at all of whatever it is that they think they are doing, whether embellishing their image—enhancing one's image, as people are so fond of saying, is a monstrous absurdity—honing their ideas, or enriching their experience; rather, they accomplish nothing greater or more substantial than children who poke about at the edge of a fishpond, fling stones into muddy water, etc.—in short, a busy non-pursuit of nothing.

No part of the surface of a figure can be realized except from its innermost core outwards.

Literary historians make a colossal entity out of certain superficialities, but in so doing they overlook what is important to the individual artist in a specific case [/sense]. Racine superstructures everything on private decisions; what need, then, has he of Shakespeare's motley and ever-shifting scenes of action? The four walls of a princely apartment, dignified but almost empty, are precisely symbolic of his requirements.

A work of art is an intricate and expansive plot through which a certain character, namely that of the author, becomes distinguishable.

Thoughtfulness of language: that it calls vain a beginning whose fulfillment is of necessity denied. It knows of the root of vanity, which lies deeper than in the social sphere.

Do not Lessing's plays reveal that he always slept without dreaming and that he was an actor?

La durée n'est promise qu'à ceux, des écrivains capables d'offrir aux successives generations des nourritures renouvelées, car chaque generation apporte une faim différente.

[Perdurability is assured only to those writers capable of offering new food to successive generations, for each generation brings a different hunger.]

*André Gide*

Novalis's remark that Goethe's meditations on light, on the metamorphoses of plants, etc. are confirmations that even a comprehensive course of study is the proper province

of the artist.

True love of language is impossible without the renunciation of language.

The average storyteller tells how something chanced to happen. The good storyteller lets something happen before our eyes as if in the present. The master storyteller tells [of something that happened long ago as if for the first time/anew of something that happened long ago].

Flaubert is a very important author. But one compares him with Goethe or with Dostoyevsky and his irony comes to seem an altogether too prevalent element of his poetry.

French prose at its highest level is in a spiritual sense more sensual, and in a sensual sense more spiritual than German prose at its present level.

Good taste is competence that holds out long enough to thwart exaggeration.

Lessing's characters carry delicacy to the point of coarseness: that is the German in them. A character like Valmont (in the *Liaisons Dangereuses*) carries vileness to the point of delicacy, that is French.

Goldoni: poetic hand, but viscera of a philistine.

People who do not write [/the people, who do not write] have one merit [as against those that do write]: they do not compromise themselves. *Goethe*

If I had to name two books that, in the absence of any affiliation with great poetry, exhibited a true inexhaustibility of human energies, I would say: La Bruyère's *Caractères* and Goethe's autobiography. Boswell's [*Life of*] *Samuel Johnson* would be a third.

Un auteur est un homme qui trouve dans des livres tout ce qui lui trotte par la tête.  
[An author is a man who finds in books everything that runs through his mind.]  
*Old introduction to Gil Blas*

In the first, idealistic phase of Wieland's spiritual life there is much that is Holderlinesque; in the second, humorist phase, much [that is] Jean-Paul-esque.

"Forcible withdrawal from one's relations [Verhältnisse] with a plot whose ideas one had been permitted merely to play with" (Letter from Heinrich von Kleist to W. von Zenge, April 14, 1801) is the automatically self-critical formula that hints at [more literally: "refers to"] Kleist's own relations [Verhalten: more notionally translated as "behavior"] and that of all of his characters.

Dichten—feindre—to feign.

Present-day biographies of artists and painters have a very unhealthy source; better that one should be satisfied with their works, wherein, for example, Gluck produces the impression of greatness and calm nobility, Haydn of happiness and kindheartedness.  
[*Jacob Burkhardt*{?}]

Every devotion to the descriptive leads to exaggeration.

Goethe is or ought to be the geometric locus for the Germans vis-à-vis the world; not a standpoint but a point in virtue of reference to which other points become figures.  
*Rudolf Pannwitz*

The French are driven to despair by the phraseology of *Wilhelm Meister*. They find it artificial and mannered to the point of insufferability.

A book such as Justi's two-volume biography of Winckelmann is noteworthy because it is excellent.

When one lives constantly in a world that is indifferent to language and hardly to be unsettled by words, one incurs the ever-increasing risk of wounding individuals through outspokenness and of exposing oneself through speech to misunderstanding.

Balzac is the closest approach of the French spirit to the German way of thinking and depicting; Goethe in the second half of his life follows the correspondingly opposite tendency.

Attribut des Genies: de coordonner, d'assembler les rapports, de les voir plus justes et étendus.

[Attribute of geniuses: {the ability} to coordinate, to assemble relations, to see them more accurately and extensively.] *Delacroix*

Dostoyevsky is a mighty poet, but in Turgenev is the most perfect magic of the artistic. In every verbal expression is a disingenuousness [Unnaives or "Unnaivety" {a gratuitously precious neologism, IHOP—DR}] that we easily grasp, but that also slips through our fingers like a cloud; and an ingenuousness [Naives] that we collide against [or, figuratively, "take amiss"], but as against a living body.

M. Joubert on Le Sage: On peut dire des romans de Le Sage qu'ils ont l'air d'être écrits dans un café par un joueur de dominos en sortant de la comédie. [One may say of the novels of Le Sage that they have the appearance of having been written in a café by a player at dominoes after an evening at the theater.]

The plastic comes into being not through perception but through identification.

The fragments of Novalis are capable of signifying spiritually heroic landscapes in which time is vanquished.

The deeper the solitude a person hails from, the more powerfully eloquent he will be;



conversely, the most sociable person, the angel of sociability, ought to look on and be silent.

Goethe is not the source of this and that in our modern literature, but he is a massif and the headwaters of each and every thing in it.

No word has fallen into desuetude among the Germans like the word *taste*. Time was when it was discussed in connection with household utensils or clothes. And yet the Latin scholar calls a man who understands taste a wise man.

The worst style is engendered when one imitates something and at the same time wishes to demonstrate that one has given careful thought to this imitation.

*Refreshing the palette* is a worthy expression in the painterly lexicon.

Certains auteurs, parlant de leurs ouvrages, dissent: Mon livre, mon commentaire, mon histoire, etc.—Ils sentent leurs bourgeois, qui ont pignon sur rue et toujours un >chez moi< à la bouche. Ils feraient mieux de dire: Notre livre, notre commentaire, notre histoire, etc.—, vue que d'ordinaire il y a plus en cela du bien d'autrui que du leur. [Certain authors, in speaking of their works, say *my book*, *my commentary*, *my history*, etc. They think of themselves as high street shopkeepers who always have a “here at my firm” on their lips. They would do better to say *our book*, *our commentary*, *our history*, etc., in the light of the fact that there is much more of other people than of themselves in these things.]

*Pascal*

He who stands alone on the point of existence, about which the poet pivots with such ease—to him acquaintance with the legerdemain of poetry, which teeters between the zone of truth and the zone of lies, can be neither satisfying—because he knows it better—nor diverting, because he stands too close to it, and in his eyes it will never amount to a whole.

*Goethe on Egmont, to Carl August*

J'ai toujours reconnu l'esprit des jeunes gens, au detail qu'ils faisaient d'une pièce nouvelle qu'ils venaient d'entendre; et j'ai remarqué que tous ceux qui s'en acquittaient le mieux, on été ceux qui depuis ont acquis le plus de reputation dans leurs emplois. Tant il est vrai qu'au fond l'esprit des affaires et le véritable esprit des belles letters est le meme.

[I have always recognized the mind of young people in the account they give of a new play that they have just seen; and I have observed that all those who acquitted themselves the best have been those who subsequently acquired the greatest reputation in their jobs. For it is true that at bottom a head for business and a head for literature are the same thing.]

*Voltaire*

The French now and then say that they envy us such an expressive and untranslatable word as *longing* [*Sehnsucht*]; but they do not realize how far this fragile, lighter-than-air

concept has fallen into discredit among modern Germans through [its] tactless misuse.

Wittier and more beautiful than the criticism of language would be an attempt to wrest oneself free of language by magical means, as it is in the love of the fall.

The combination of the descriptive with the enthusiastic yields an insufferable genre.

Hebbel's poems are a grandiose crystallization of life. In their entirety, not individually, they have something of classical antiquity about them.

That we Germans refer to what surrounds us as something active [*Wirkendes*—as “actuality,” [*Wirklichkeit*] and [that] the Latin Europeans [refer to it] as “objectivity,” [*Dinglichkeit*] points up the fundamental difference of spirit [between us], and the fact that they and we are at home in this world in entirely different ways.

Le premier mérite d'un tableau, c'est d'être une fête pour l'œil.  
[The principal merit of a painting is that of being a feast for the eyes.]  
*Delacroix*

Nature pervades everything with the mystery of non-understanding: this holds sway even between the spiritual product and its own begetter.

On Goethe's *Novelle*: There, where a high form is attained, the subject-matter, the authentic, seems attenuated to the average reader, whereas it is merely purified; the average reader, like the pure one, receives his due naively.

The exorcism of spirits is accomplished in poor[ly written] narratives by means of elaborate and curious formulas; in the best accounts, by means of the simplest elements of speech—individual words; indeed, syllables.

Entre autres choses, ce qui fait le grand peintre, c'est la combinaison hardie d'accessoires qui augmente l'impression. Ces nuages qui volent dans le meme sens que le cavalier emporté par son cheval, les plis de son manteau qui l'enveloppent ou flottent autour des flancs de sa monture. Cette association puissante.....car, que'est-ce que composer? C'est associer avec puissance.

[Among other things, what makes a good painter is the bold combination of incidentals that augment the impression. Those clouds that fly in the same way as the knight carried along by his horse, the folds of his cloak that surround or flutter about the flanks of his mount. This powerful association...for what is composition? It is powerful association.]

*Delacroix*

The rule is useful only to him who can do without it; but it merely corrupts him who believes his own wisdom is insured by it; each rule is a riddle that helps him to escape from another riddle.

*Arnim*

The only poetic [virtue] that I will acknowledge in Bürger's performances is life. But life

is only an element of beauty and not beauty itself. *Friedrich to August Wilhelm Schlegel*

We search everywhere for the unconditional [*das Unbedingte*] and discover everywhere nothing but conditions [*Dinge*]. *Novalis*

The fact that we make use of a single word, *Fleisch*, for two such gapingly divergent concepts—nay concepts of [completely] different orders—as those that the French designate, respectively, as *chair* [“flesh”] and *viand* [“meat”], demonstrates [in a single instance the arduous obtuseness of the carnal imagination].

What it really means to hear a word that we are accustomed always to hear in a half or entirely transferred sense in its actual, material application may be seen in the strong impression made on Goethe when he ran into these verses in the *Nibelungenlied*:

“It was the mighty Siegfried, out of the tall grass sprung,  
From out of his heart there towered a spear-pole long.”

[I take it that this is meant to be retro-proto Freudian in (ahem) thrust.—DR]

To get the better of someone, really to get the better of him, means to run on the Alpine pasture of the bend [???? (Presumably{?}some sort of Austro-Bavarian analogue to “head him off at the pass”)—DR] and thereby to forestall him; driving him [back] into his [own] redoubt depends on luck and means entering a somewhat risky game.

Allusion is an inferior form of rhetoric that cannot occur in elevated discourse because the latter is through and through an allusion to the immediate.

[Alternatively: “Innuendo is an inferior form of rhetoric that cannot occur in elevated discourse because the latter is through and through an innuendo of {/to?/at? (You see now why I opted for ‘allusion’ instead.—DR)} the explicit.”]

In Gottfried Keller there is a perpetual recourse to gentle irony that ultimately makes one impatient.

Can comedy appeal to us without a dash of mysticism?

Among those whom fate has genuinely compelled to engage in play-acting, the heroic and tragic actors are in flight from the ego; the comic ones, from the world.

L’avilissement des mots est une de ces bizarreries de mœurs qui, pour être expliquée, voudrait des volumes. Écrivez à un avoué en le qualifiant *d’homme de loi*, vous l’aurez offensé tout autant que vous offenseriez un négociant en gros de denrées coloniales à qui vous adresseriez ainsi votre lettre: --*Monsieur un tel, épicier*. Un assez grand nombre de gens du monde qui devraient savoir, puisque c’est là toute leur science, ces délicatesses du savoir-vivre, ignorant encore que la qualification *d’homme de lettres* est la plus cruelle injure qu’on puisse faire à un auteur.

[The devaluation of words is one of those quirks of etiquette that would require volumes to explain. To write to an attorney while dubbing him a *lawyer* is to offend him as much as you would in addressing your letter to a wholesale dealer in colonial goods as *Mr. So-And-So, Grocer*. A rather substantial number of people in society, who should know better, inasmuch as the totality of their knowledge consists of such niceties of good

breeding, are unaware that the title *man of letters* is the cruelest of insults that one can deliver to an author.] *Balzac*

And so among us [i.e., "us Germanophones" or "us people of the twentieth century"?--DR] with the title journalist, inter alia.

Prerogative of the French language, that it can unaffectedly form the plural of sensual abstractions: *les fatigues, les vides, les noirs*.

Dialect permits no idiosyncratic speech, but one idiosyncratic voice.

The determinant fact in Hebbel was that he too little of what the Greeks called αἶδώς. In the poet this [quality] inheres in his language. One's relation to language is inborn. Hebbel and Sophocles, [are] polar opposites.

Claudel on Baudelaire's style: *C'est un extraordinaire mélange du style racinien et du style journaliste de son temps*. [It is an extraordinary combination of the style of Racine and the journalistic style of his age.]

It is most significant, that we cannot [manage] to come up with a word for *sobre* in a laudatory sense, a word that recurs time and again, and with the greatest emphasis, in the aesthetics of the French; German, oddly enough, associates no agreeable connotation with "nüchtern." ["sober," but also "prosaic" or "Philistine"--DR] On the foundation of this poverty of linguistic usage the existentially rich, the unique, could flower, like the marvelous, word-uniting "heilig nüchtern" ["sacredly sober"] in Hölderlin.

Only he who creates the frailest thing can create the strongest one.

Böcklin is Poussin, coarsened and sentimentalized.

Goethe's significance for German literature is admittedly colossal; but has he ever had a comparable significance, or any significance at all, for the German people? Who dares answer [this question]? The French are a people that moves [steadily] along under [the seat of] its spiritual rider and are guided by a gentle tug at the reins—or it simply takes the bit between its teeth and runs; the German people move behind the reins and one does not know [in its case] if there is even a rider in the saddle.

Genius begets a harmony between the world in which it lives and the world that lives in it.

Goethe's works unite sociability with solitude.

Poetry in its highest register alludes to something on which everything that has ever happened rests and that is more mysterious than causality: that Hector and Achilles never meet before that single, decisive engagement cannot be argued; it can merely be set forth.

While we are enjoying a Chinese poem in an English or German transcription, we receive a content[—a content] that we know to be inseparable by any means from its form[—]via a formless, remote suggestion of a form, in virtue of which that content first becomes existent. We are therefore drinking the reflection of wine as we raise the reflection of a cup to our lips. If we become drunk all the same, is not then this consequence[—a consequence] that we experience under such remarkable conditions, and that we place in the highest category[—]one of the sort that is [vouchsafed] us through the agency of religion?

*Highly [suggestive] observations of Goethe in a diary entry for November 16, 1808:*  
Meditations on reflection from above or outside versus the inferiority [=“underneathness” not “poorness of quality” --DR] and interiority of poetry--e.g., the gods in Homer only a reflection of the hero; hence, the anthropomorphic reflections of all types in religions. Twin world that ensues therefrom, that alone is loveable, as love also forms such a reflection. And the *Nibelungen* so terrifying because it is a poem without reflection; and its heroes like beings of iron exist only for themselves.

The most notable Germans seem always to be swimming underwater; only Goethe, like a solitary dolphin, strikes the water's reflective surface.

The world has lost its innocence, and without innocence one can neither create nor enjoy a work of art.

The catchword of the day is *criticism*. Weber is a *critical* composer.  
Music is the only art that our innovators have *invented*.  
*Grillparzer*

In youth one finds the so-called interesting worthy of note; in ripe old age, the good.

Naturalism deviates from nature because in order to imitate the surface it is obliged to neglect the inner richness of connections, the authentic mystery of nature.

In a work of art of the highest order, just as in an organic structure, the most miraculous thing is not the individual form but the emergence of one form from another.

Tous le rapports dont le style est composé sont autant de vèntés aussi utiles et peut-être plus précieuses pour l'esprit humain que celles qui peuvent faire le fond du sujet.  
[All of the relations of which style is composed are as windswept {?} as useful and perhaps more precious for the human mind than those which may form the basis of one's subject.]  
*Buffon*

When minds of the highest order, like Goethe and Leonardo, stoop to playing, then, but only then, creations like the fairy tale of the lily and the serpent or the chamber with the winding [Reblauben] in [the castle at Milan] come into being.

The purest poetry is a thoroughgoing being-outside-of-oneself, the most perfect prose a

thoroughgoing coming-to-oneself. The second is perhaps even rarer than the first.

Only from what seems to lie completely in the open air and ready to hand can the high operations of the mystery originate.

Magnificent words of Poussin, at the end of his life:

J n'ai rien négligé.

[I {have} neglected nothing.]

[THE END]

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