

Roland Barthes

Quotes

*Photography, Writing, Men, Desire, Doe, Language, Two, Trying, World, Past,
Mean, Literature, Photograph, Sight, Class, Needs, Law, Waiting, Memories,
Children*

Language is a skin: I rub my language against the other. It is as if I had words instead of fingers, or fingers at the tip of my words. My language trembles with desire.

~Roland Barthes

...language is never innocent.

~Roland Barthes

Each of us has his own rhythm of suffering.

~Roland Barthes

I am interested in language because it wounds or seduces me.

~Roland Barthes

The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author.

~Roland Barthes

Man does not exist prior to language, either as a species or as an individual.

~Roland Barthes

To try to write love is to confront the muck of language: that region of hysteria where language is both too much and too little, excessive and impoverished.

~Roland Barthes

The skyscraper establishes the block, the block creates the street, the street offers itself to man.

~Roland Barthes

We know that the war against intelligence is always waged in the name of common sense.

~Roland Barthes

The photographic image... is a message without a code.

~Roland Barthes

If I had to create a god, I would lend him a "slow understanding": a kind of drip-by-drip understanding of problems. People who understand quickly frighten me.

~Roland Barthes

Language is legislation, speech is its code. We do not see the power which is in speech because we forget that all speech is a classification, and that all classifications are oppressive.

~Roland Barthes

Literature is the question minus the answer.

~Roland Barthes

A light without shadow generates an emotion without reserve.

~Roland Barthes

I have tried to be as eclectic as I possibly can with my professional life, and so far it's been pretty fun.

~Roland Barthes

What the Photograph reproduces to infinity has occurred only once: the Photograph mechanically repeats what could never be repeated existentially.

~Roland Barthes

The new is not a fashion, it is a value.

~Roland Barthes

Someone tells me: this kind of love is not viable. But how can you evaluate viability? Why is the viable a Good Thing? Why is it better to last than to burn?

~Roland Barthes

Every new Fashion is a refusal to inherit, a subversion against the oppression of the preceding Fashion; Fashion experiences itself as a Right, the natural right of the present over the past.

~Roland Barthes

We don't forget, but something vacant settles in us.

~Roland Barthes

I passed beyond the unreality of the thing represented, I entered crazily into the spectacle, into the image, taking into my arms what is dead, what is going to die.

~Roland Barthes

Don't say mourning. It's too psychoanalytic. I'm not mourning. I'm suffering.

~Roland Barthes

There is only one way left to escape the alienation of present day society: to retreat ahead of it.

~Roland Barthes

I encounter millions of bodies in my life; of these millions, I may desire some hundreds; but of these hundreds, I love only one.

~Roland Barthes

â€”the book creates meaning, the meaning creates life.

~Roland Barthes

Is not the most erotic part of the body wherever the clothing affords a glimpse?

~Roland Barthes

What love lays bare in me is energy.

~Roland Barthes

Literature is like phosphorus: it shines with its maximum brilliance and the moment when it attempts to die.

~Roland Barthes

Painting can feign reality without having seen it.

~Roland Barthes

To whom could I put this question (with any hope of an answer)? Does being able to live without someone you loved mean you loved her less than you thought...?

~Roland Barthes

A photograph is always invisible, it is not it that we see.

~Roland Barthes

How does meaning get into the image? Where does it end? And if it ends, what is there beyond?

~Roland Barthes

To eat steak rare . . . represents both a nature and a morality.

~Roland Barthes

The author enters into his own death, writing begins.

~Roland Barthes

Every exploration is an appropriation.

~Roland Barthes

To make someone wait: the constant prerogative of all power.

~Roland Barthes

To eat, to speak, to sing (need we add: to kiss?) are operations which have the same site of the body for origin.

~Roland Barthes

He who reads a story only once is condemned to read the same story his whole life.

~Roland Barthes

The best principals are not heroes; they are hero makers.

~Roland Barthes

Every photograph is a certificate of presence.

~Roland Barthes

The incapacity to name is a good symptom of disturbance.

~Roland Barthes

What I claim is to live to the full the contradiction of my time, which may well make sarcasm the condition of truth.

~Roland Barthes

Myth is neither a lie nor a confession: it is an inflexion.

~Roland Barthes

I make the other's absence responsible for my worldliness.

~Roland Barthes

Who speaks is not who writes, and who writes is not who is.

~Roland Barthes

The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture.

~Roland Barthes

Why is it better to last than to burn?

~Roland Barthes

Cameras, in short, were clocks for seeing, and perhaps in me someone very old still hears in the photographic mechanism the living sound of the wood.

~Roland Barthes

Thus every writer's motto reads: mad I cannot be, sane I do not deign to be, neurotic I am.

~Roland Barthes

Literature is without proofs. By which it must be understood that it cannot prove, not only what it says, but even that it is worth the trouble of saying it.

~Roland Barthes

The haiku reproduces the designating gesture of the child pointing at whatever it is (the haiku shows no partiality for the subject), merely saying: that!

~Roland Barthes

Whereas the work is understood to be traceable to a source (through a process of derivation or "filiation"), the Text is without a source - the "author" a mere "guest" at the reading of the Text.

~Roland Barthes

Ultimately, Photography is subversive, not when it frightens, repels, or even stigmatizes, but when it is pensive, when it thinks.

~Roland Barthes

All those young photographers who are at work in the world, determined upon the capture of actuality, do not know that they are agents of Death.

~Roland Barthes

Isn't the most sensitive point of this mourning the fact that I must lose a language â€” the amorous language? No more â€”I love you's.

~Roland Barthes

It is no longer the sexual which is indecent, it is the sentimental.

~Roland Barthes

For the theatre one needs long arms; it is better to have them too long than too short. An artiste with short arms can never, never make a fine gesture.

~Roland Barthes

Through the mythology of Einstein, the world blissfully regained the image of knowledge reduced to a formula.

~Roland Barthes

I try to busy myself elsewhere, to arrive late; but I always lose at this game. Whatever I do, I find myself there, with nothing to do, punctual, even ahead of time.

~Roland Barthes

All of a sudden it didn't bother me not being modern.

~Roland Barthes

Le langage est une peau: je frotte mon langage contre l'autre.
Language is a skin; I rub my language against another language.

~Roland Barthes

Tout refus du langage est une mort. Any refusal of language is a death.

~Roland Barthes

The necessary condition for an image is sight.

~Roland Barthes

The politician being interviewed clearly takes a great deal of trouble to imagine an ending to his sentence: and if he stopped short? His entire policy would be jeopardized!

~Roland Barthes

The Ventoux is a god of Evil, to which sacrifices must be made. It never forgives weakness and extracts an unfair tribute of suffering.

~Roland Barthes

I call the discourse of power any discourse that engenders blame, hence guilt, in its recipient.

~Roland Barthes

Television doomed us to the Family, whose household instrument it has become-what the hearth used to be, flanked by the communal kettle.

~Roland Barthes

Those who fail to reread are obliged to read the same story everywhere.

~Roland Barthes

I love you is unsubtle. It removes explanations, facilities, degrees, scruples.

~Roland Barthes

The gesture of the amorous embrace seems to fulfill, for a time, the subject's dream of total union with the loved being: The longing for consummation with the other.

~Roland Barthes

As Spectator I wanted to explore photography not as a question (a

theme) but as a wound.

~Roland Barthes

It must always be considered as though spoken by a character in a novel

~Roland Barthes

The realists do not take the photograph for a 'copy' of reality, but for an emanation of past reality, a magic, not an art.

~Roland Barthes

Literature is that which he can not read without pain, without choking on truth.

~Roland Barthes

The lover's fatal identity is precisely this: I am the one who waits.

~Roland Barthes

A picture is never anything but its own plural description.

~Roland Barthes

Where you are tender, you speak your plural.

~Roland Barthes

Architecture is always dream and function, expression of a utopia and instrument of a convenience.

~Roland Barthes

Frontiers are physical as well as symbolic constructions

~Roland Barthes

One must turn the tongue seven times in the mouth before speaking.

~Roland Barthes

This endured absence is nothing more or less than forgetfulness. I am, intermittently, unfaithful. This is the condition of my survival.

~Roland Barthes

Fashion postulates an achrony, a time which does not exist; here the past is shameful and the present is constantly "eaten up" by the Fashion being heralded.

~Roland Barthes

The petit-bourgeois is a man unable to imagine the Other. If he comes face to face with him, he blinds himself, ignores and denies him, or else transforms him into himself.

~Roland Barthes

Are not couturiers the poets who, from year to year, from strophe to strophe, write the anthem of the feminine body?

~Roland Barthes

I have not a desire but a need for solitude.

~Roland Barthes

Flaubert had infinite correction to perform.

~Roland Barthes

As a language, Garbo's singularity was of the order of the concept, that of Audrey Hepburn is of the order of the substance; the face of Garbo is an Idea, that of Hepburn, an Event.

~Roland Barthes

The Text is not a definitive object.

~Roland Barthes

To dope the racer is as criminal, as sacrilegious, as trying to imitate God; it is stealing from God the privilege of the spark.

~Roland Barthes

Great portrait photographers are great mythologists.

~Roland Barthes

When we look at a photograph of ourselves or of others, we are really looking at the return of the dead.

~Roland Barthes

Today there is no symbolic compensation for old age, no recognition of a specific value: wisdom, perceptiveness, experience, vision.

~Roland Barthes

Every object in the world can pass from a closed, silent existence to an oral state, open to appropriation by society, for there is no law, whether natural or not, which forbids talking about things

~Roland Barthes

Language is neither reactionary nor progressive; it is quite simply fascist; for fascism does not prevent speech, it compels speech.

~Roland Barthes

Tout ce qui est anachronique est obsce' ne. Everything anachronistic is obscene.

~Roland Barthes

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