Introduction
Uit: The gentlest law: Roland Barthes's *The Pleasure of the Text*
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"Roland Barthes has just published *The Pleasure of the Text*, incontestably one of the great books of the decade." So wrote *Les Nouvelles littéraires* in January 1975 (GV 198), and it was not an exaggeration. Well beyond the end of that decade, the book remains one of the great critical texts of a sensational author, a creator of discourses who is cited in an amazing variety of contexts. And there is no apprehending Barthes without understanding this minute but challenging and enigmatic text. Yet people have not fathomed its intricately woven and highly condensed discourse, nor pondered the distilled essence of its thought. Barthes is habitually misapprehended. As Peter Brooks has written, "Barthes remains the object of considerable resistance, even of hostility" ("Reinventing Reading," 46).

Readers of the book in English have often simply failed to comprehend it; some have called it whimsical or flirtatious, fanciful or eccentric; most have grasped its erotics, but little else; many have made up their own Barthes. .. In English, and to the average reader, Barthes's prose seemS "anything but communicative, and often flatly impenetrable" (Stephen Koch, "Melancholy King of the Cats," 35). None of this is justified. Little does the reader of English realize how much has been lost or distorted in translation, and how many passages have been made incomprehensible. Many of the criticisms of the book stem from these blunders in the translation--contradictions, nonsense, "flattenings," omissions, and misunderstanding. *The Pleasure of the Text* is dense and enigmatic, to be sure, but if the prose is "impenetrable" it is largely because of its intertextuality. Barthes's French is lucid. It is not quirky, whimsical, and frivolous-unless these words be redefined; it does not prance from topic to topic as heedlessly as people widely believe. Close reading of this prose yields a cogent text whose very logic it was the purpose of *The Pleasure of the Text* to hide. The reader's pleasure lies in sorting out that logic, as the voyeur of the writer's pleasure (see "Commentaire").

I grant that this view of the "later Barthes" may not be universal. Logic, cogency, lucidity, distilled essence, condensed discourse - these are not terms one finds often in the critical language on Barthes after his most baldly structuralist phase. Yet I maintain that these descriptions are not in conflict with the revolution that *The Pleasure of the Text* brought about, and this is a premise of what follows. Some have taken the striking evolutions and revolutions of his writing as grounds for reading Barthes against himself. It has been far too easy to treat Barthes's unique discourse - his play with language, his apparent mobility, his idiosyncratic style, especially his self-exposure - as a lack of seriousness. Even dedicated Barthesians, especially in English-speaking countries, do not realize how much his writing has concentrated his thought, and they too misquote. *The Pleasure of the Text* is exemplary of that condensation, at a crucial moment in Barthes' s evolution; it is the central, seminal, radical, single most important work, for it inaugurates the ultimate Roland Barthes, the one that people write about and argue about.

I write this book because there is pleasure in understanding Barthes, and I would like to convey that pleasure. My Commentary on each chapter, never exhaustive, is intended to bring to light the intimate thread of its logic. Here I make suggestions, not definitive statements; if my readings do not go far enough for some, let me nevertheless ask all readers to listen to what I am hearing. While it is perfectly possible to "make up one's own Barthes," as I claim people have done, and remain, paradoxically, in Barthes, the quality of the personal understanding we may have-must have--can only improve with a better reading of the text itself. That principle has never been lost, whatever the critical fashion. A major goal of this book is to define and demonstrate just what a better reading might be-for this text and for any text.

The Intertexts which I propose for each section are a way of opening up the reading. *The Pleasure of the Text* is about intertextuality, as well as an illustration of it: pleasure is intertextuality, the presence of other texts in the text. *The Pleasure of the Text* explains what goes on in the reader of literature: it is a theory of reading, a theory of the reading subject, and a theory of writing. It both theorizes the reader's relation to the text and exemplifies it; Barthes demonstrates his reading pleasure in the very practice of writing about it. We can "apply" it to the reading of concrete texts, and plumb its theoretical formulations about the classical or modern text. And we should not fail to use this theory of writing, reading, and intertextuality to understand Barthes's other books. I invite you to reread *The Pleasure of the Text* with new eyes.

The procedures of this book are thus double: to analyze or explicate *The Pleasure of the Text* chapter by chapter, suggesting as necessary corrections to Richard Miller's translation, and to discover and uncover its intertextuality, for all readers. Discovering that intertextuality, and using the light it reflects on the text, I want to propose a version of the text that is as lucid as the original is in the profundity of its thought.

But that is not my sole purpose. This book contains information pertinent to all Barthes, especially the Barthes of the later years. The major change in Barthes's thinking occurred with *The Pleasure of the Text* - beginning perhaps just before, with Sade, Fourier, Loyola (1971), but finding its most intense voice in *The Pleasure of the Text*. All of the later books, including the much-cited *Roland Barthes, A Lover's Discourse: Fragments,* and *Camera Lucida*, have deep roots in *The Pleasure of the Text*. The entire concept of text must be referred to *The Pleasure of the Text*-but few have done so, since many have failed to read the book closely. It is here that Barthes molds in pleasure his position with respect to modern writers and other artists. The critique of ideology and the critique of the critique of ideology mark here a major change from the early Barthes and explain the turn to the deeply personal *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* and *Camera Lucida*. The insistent psychoanalytic influence at this stage explains the later texts, just as the Nietzschean philosophy, important for "our time" in 1973 and for Barthes till his death, is still important for our reading of Barthes now, and for the critical climate of deconstruction. Barthes would eliminate the full subject by proposing a new linguistics inspired by his reading of Nietzsche, and a new concept of text as productivity instead of product or production. The theory of *The Pleasure of the Text* also illuminates the previous books, especially *S/Z*, which it outdoes and undoes.

The Pleasure of the Text is central partly because it is not tied to a specific situation or place-to a topic, as *Empire of Signs* and *Camera Lucida* are; it remains atopical. Nor is it consigned to a topical text or practice, as *The Fashion System, S/Z, and Sade, Fourier, Loyola* are; to a being, as Roland Barthes is; to an emotion and a language, as *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* is. All these other texts had an "origin," avowed but then obscured: *The Fashion System* was the product of a research grant in sociology; *S/Z* and *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* grew from seminars; *Empire of Signs* came from a trip to Japan; even the uniquely innovative *Roland Barthes* began as the next volume in the well-known and widely read "Par lui-meme" series offered by

Barthes's publisher, the Editions du Seuil, although it was provocatively innovative to take the series title literally; and the intensely personal *Camera Lucida* is anchored in the artistic practice mentioned in its subtitle, *Reflections on Photography*. The great majority of the essays were written on commission, often as prefaces. But *The Pleasure of the Text* came from Barthes's body.

In a little-known, one-page "Supplement" to *The Pleasure of the Text*, written later the same year and described as the first written prolongation of the text, Barthes reprises certain terms from the book, and in a section titled "Productivité" affirms its central position:

> Once the book has appeared, the best comments by readers (none, by definition, is negligible, because they assure the proliferation of the text) are those that go looking, in the reactive text (like good researching thinkers), for *the clandestine points of productivity.* The finished book (this only means: published) fatally includes the outline of an infinite work. In a book, there are programmatic knots, referring to a work to be done. Such are no doubt, in *The Pleasure of the Text*: Celebration as augmentation (apropos of Severo Sarduy), the differential rhythms of reading, the drift, the exchange, Fiction, the Sentence, the new language (the one that spoke for me in a Tangier bar), the next-to-the-last language.

From the center that I see in *The Pleasure of the Text*, commentary and intertextuality radiate to all the corners of Roland Barthes.

¶

On the Intertexts

Le signifié poétique renvoie à des signifiés discursifs autres, de sorte que dans l'énoncé poétique plusieurs autres discours sont lisibles. Il se crée, ainsi, autour du signifié poétique, un espace textuel multiple dont les elements sont susceptibles d'être appliques dans le texte poétique concret Nous appellerons cet espace intertextuel. Pris dans l'intertextualité, l'énoncé poétique est un sous-ensembIe d'un ensemble plus grand qui est l'espace des textes appliqués dans notre ensemble.

[The poetic signified refers to other discursive signifieds, so that in the poetic utterance several other discourses are readable. Thus is created, around the poetic signified, a multiple textual space the elements of which are capable of being applied in the concrete poetic text We will call this space intertextual. Fixed in intertextuality, the poetic utterance is a subset of a larger set which is the space of the texts applied in our set]

-Julia Kristeva, Semeiotiké 255

C'est toute la culture, l'ensemble infini des lectures, des conversations. . . bref l'inter-texte, qui fait pression sur un travail et frappe à la porte pour y entrer.

[It is the whole of culture, the infinite assemblage of readings, of conversations . . . in short the intertext, that puts pressure on a work and knocks at the door to get in.]

-Roland Barthes, "Réponses" 97-98

It would be anti-Barthesian to describe *The Pleasure of the Text* as erudite, but the fact is that it refers to a truly staggering number of other texts. Some are tagged, with a name or quotation marks; others simply are not: Barthes quotes without attribution. "I did not 'list my sources,'" Barthes said about S/Z; "if I neglected to mention my creditors. . . it's to emphasize that in my eyes it's the entire text, through and through, which is citatory" (GV 78). *The Pleasure of the Text* is also citatory through and through-and many of the "creditors" are unmentioned. Every sentence or phrase in quotation marks is a citation; many unmarked phrases are also. There is a kind of casual assumption of "that intertextual space formed by the texts that surround and accompany me, proceed me, follow me, communicate with me. You know the ones I mean, I needn't name them, it would just be the same names of the familiar group" (GV 129).

This practice of Barthes's has led into error. Vincent Leitch, who wrote the following sentence, should be biting his tongue: "In a section of *The Pleasure of the Text* entitled 'Subject,' Barthes, who rarely quotes anyone in this text, cites Nietzsche" (*Deconstructive Criticism*, 112; my emphasis). Finding this sentence in Leitch's fine book after I had discovered the extent of Barthes' s intertextuality, and the *siz*e of his Nietzschean debt in particular, I frankly enjoyed a good laugh. Yet I suspect Leitch expresses the opinion of many readers of *The Pleasure of the Text*.

But intertextuality is not just a matter of quotation, with or without attribution-far from it. Barthes had much to say about it. First of all it is a way to pluralize, diffuse, disseminate, and finally explode meaning. It is opposed to *context*: "in general, the context forces us to choose one of the two meanings and to forget the other" (RB 72). The action of the intertext "serves to combat the law of context" (RB 172), which reduces signifiance to communication: "to 'take context into account' (in philology, in criticism, in linguistics) is always a *positive* move, reductive, legal, aligned with the evidences of rationalism: context is in sum an asymbolic object. . ." ("Réponses" 101), whereas the intertext is the text in that it traverses and is traversed. Always traversed by other texts, always traversing other texts, the text is necessarily caught up in a system of intertextuality, full of intertexts and itself the intertext of other texts.

"Hence the ideal would be," Barthes writes, "neither a text of vanity, nor a text of lucidity, but a text with uncertain quotation marks, with floating parentheses (never to close the parenthesis is very specifically: *to drift*). This also depends on the reader, who produces the spacing of the readings" (RB 106). *The Pleasure of the Text* would have been a text of vanity if Barthes had quoted entirely without quotation marks-in fact a kind of plagiarism (a value aligned with jouissance and hysteria); it would have been a text of lucidity if he had rigorously held to an ethic of quotation, conscientiously marking what came to him from elsewhere; instead, it drifts among uncertain quotation marks in the intertextual space. The spacing we produce, by "looking up" when something in the text solicits our attention to another voice, another writing, also opens the text to new and ever deepening layers of parentheses. Barthes has a utopian and materialist vision of language, as he writes in RB 161, "that of infinitely spread-out languages, of parentheses never to be closed: a utopian vision in that it supposes a mobile, plural reader, who nimbly inserts and removes the quotation marks: who begins to write with me." I can attest just how nimble one needs to be in inserting and removing quotation marks in *The Pleasure of the Text*. I was often surprised to find intertexts where none were apparent. Such a mobile and plural reader is utopian indeed: there are only degrees of mobility and plurality in our individual and respective cultures, and there are most certainly intertexts I have not found.

Intertextuality is the intrusion of another voice, the projection of the reader into the space of the writing, and the projection of the writing into the space of the reading. It is

resemblance and difference; it is reminiscence; it is hallucination. It is the very production of the text, as Riffaterre has shown. It is the ways of reading a text through other texts, be they later: Barthes reads Stendhal and Flaubert through Proust; Proust is a way of reading any text (F58/E36); such readings leap across time. Intertextuality is the phenomenon that lets the reader receive the texts in the text, a process that a pleasure of recognition accompanies, thus doubling the pleasure of the text. The subject of such a reading is split, but its two parts are not opposed; they are "both/and" - simultaneously this text and that other text. And intertextuality is also the opening of the text to its future productivity, through its "programmatic knots," as Barthes wrote in his "Supplément," a truly infinite prospect.

Reading intertextually, one can argue, is actually the only way to read. If, as has been claimed, a poem is always made of other poems, if the "average reader" or the "superreader" or any other reader, for that matter, necessarily reads with a certain culture, then intertextuality is the omnipresent, predominant mechanism of reading itself; it is, as Laurent Jenny wrote, "the very condition of literary readability. Outside of intertextuality, the literary work would very simply be imperceptible, just like the word or speech of an unknown language" ("La stratégie de la forme," 257). For what happens when we read? We organize and absorb something that just comes to us, if only because of our reminiscences--our "circular reminiscences" as Barthes wrote in "Inter-texte." And we do this even if we do not put it down in writing, as I have done. In terms of the broad currents of literary analysis, one may say that both the insistence on the text itself, characteristic of American New Criticism in which I like so many others was trained, and the rigorous description of the formal features of a text solidly established since structuralism may now yield to a pervasive intertextuality, the recognition of the codes outside the text itself of which it is made.

But though intertextuality threatens to become this universal, the phenomenon is nevertheless peculiar to Barthes; there is a Barthes-specific intertextuality. As a *writer* he wrote intertextually, and that calls for an intertextual reading, just as for instance the imitation practiced by French Renaissance poets may call for a reading of their Latin, Greek, and Italian models. Hut do not misunderstand: the doctrine of imitation implies one kind of intertextual reading; Barthes's intertextual code was quite different. He did not give the reader his intertexts, nor did he address a demand; instead, he made a site for rapture in the reader, a site to be filled: he "cruised" the reader. Thus solicited, I have supplied those intertexts I can identify in order to read *The Pleasure of the Text* with the "library" Barthes wrote it with. As for the intertexts I missed, it is because of my own reading pleasure, which took the form of a particular kind of tmesis (see "Bords," F20-22/EIO-ll): there are passages I skipped, books I skipped, because they did not make me think I might get from them the pleasure of "circular reminiscence" that I sought.

But *intertexts are not sources*. When Barthes was reproached for his recourse to references to the domain of "Knowledge," Frédéric Berthet undertook to exonerate him in these terms: "that no quotation is sure, that any recourse (to an author, to a canton of Knowledge) has its burden of un controllability, that the supports the written needs are only temporary annexations, and what counts is the trace, the approach to the threshold. . . that each Knowledge has foreclosed, for its part, for the sole purpose of being able to constitute itself' (Prétexte 357-58). Intertextuality is also uncontrollable know ledge, temporary annexations and traces on the path to the text.

Thus one does not expect Barthes to be "accurate." "I cite the Others," he writes, "even as I distort them; I shift the meaning of words" (RL 357). Only a work has sources and influences; finding them is to satisfy the myth of filiation. Every *text* has intertextuality;

it is itself the "entre-texte" of another text; "the quotations a text is made of are anonymous, irrecoverable, and yet already read: they are quotations without quotation marks" ("From Work to Text," RL 60). The intertexts are not sources because Barthes does what he wants with them, making them enter his text, passing them through his own turnstile, perhaps ignoring certain meanings of a term. His hostility to "influences" would nevertheless admit of the kind of activity I have done to find these intertexts, of which I will say only this: knowing the text, letting it resonate, making shrewd guesses, reading a sizable library, enjoying it. Far from reducing the text's meaning to a set of established knowledge, "the restoration of the intertext paradoxically abolishes inheritance" (RL 61).

In the preface to *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, Barthes wrote: "The only possible rejoinder [to ideology] is neither confrontation nor destruction, but only theft: fragment the old text of culture, science, literature, and [disseminate] its features according to formulae of disguise, as one disguises stolen goods" (SFL 10). I like this quotation because it insists on robbery: that is what Barthes does with his intertexts. As texts enter Barthes's text, they become part of it, no longer outside it as mere sources. And that is *The Pleasure of the Text*-the other texts become an inseparable part of his body. If I read *The Pleasure of the Text*, I read his body as the body from which radiate all the other bodies encountered here, and I read with mine (using mine); that is my pleasure of the text. I am the voyeur (not the confidant, who is persuaded by the skillful appeal to sources as proofs, as buttresses for an argument); I am clandestinely watching Roland Barthes's pleasure and taking pleasure in it. To the institutional reader, only this pleasure is available. If I were to drift, if I were a hysterical reader, I would commit suicide as a writer. "What relation can there be between *The Pleasure of the Text* and the institutions of the text? Very slight. . .. By its very principles, [the theory of the text] can produce only theoreticians or practitioners (scriptors), not specialists (critics, researchers, professors, students)" ("Science," F95-96/E60, in my own translation). Nor do I wish to scuttle myself, like the artist in a vain attempt to escape recuperation ("Récuperation," F86/E54).

In short, identifying Barthes' s intertexts is *not* a way of limiting, closing off, or pinning down his meanings; it is not to establish filiations; on the contrary, it is the very activity he seeks in his reader-"to write *with me*"-and his choice to write with "uncertain quotation marks" is the ideal way to produce this kind of reading in us. Reading intertextually is what Barthes wanted. (Kristeva regretted that the term intertextuality had often been [mis]understood in the banal sense of "source criticism" and proposed in 1974 the term transposition in its stead [*Revolution in Poetic Language*, 59-60], but it is the former term that has survived.) The intertextual reading produces a more plural text. A text always inevitably refers to something else; the more it refers to, the more it is plural; we bring these other texts to the text; and this is what Barthes means by writing with him: we are collaborators in the text. This is our pleasure of the text: both the feeling of pleasure and our version of
his book. Barthes was not necessarily listening to the intertexts I have seen, but I heard them, because he "cruised" me as a space for his rapture. Nor am I foreclosing other people's Barthes; but I hope to make my case strongly enough to bring other readers along with me-and let other ideas of Barthes stand or fall on their own. Not only do we always read intertextually, but we necessarily read our own book. And we have never finished identifying intertexts. Each goes on. Finally, the text transmigrates into the reader and becomes part of her; intertextually it writes part of her.

Certain intertexts insist. The writings of Nietzsche are the most important, the Nietzsche who dared to "dis-course from brilliance to brilliance, from abyss to abyss" (GV 72) that French culture has lacked; who formulated the "indifference to science" that has become very important to Barthes (GV Ill); who gave to nihilism a definition that *The Pleasure of the Text* rests on; whose subject is fictive; who is cited most in *The Pleasure of the Text*-

and the most often occulted. Quotations without quotation marks are not the only traces of this rejection of acknowledgment or attribution; there are references that are completely unmarked, as if Nietzsche were a textual space in which *The Pleasure of the Text* functions. What comes to Barthes from reading Nietzsche is this: "A kind of music, a pensive sonority, a more or less dense play of anagrams. (I had my head full of Nietzsche, whom I had just been reading; but what I wanted, what I was trying to collect, was a song of sentence-ideas: the influence was purely prosodic)" (RB 107). But *The Pleasure of the Text* never excuses, never explains itself.

Stylistic tics come from Nietzsche: the sentence lacking a main verb, the sentence beginning with an infinitive, the noun lacking an article: "Fiction of an individual (a kind of M. Teste in reverse) who would abolish within himself. . ." (F9/E3, "Babel," in my translation), a paragraph opener very like one in the French translation of *The Will to Power*. A pensive sonority, indeed, but an influence that is more than purely prosodic. When Barthes "copies" Nietzsche's "la méfiance à l'égard de" (found in both *La volonté de puissance* and *Le voyageur et son ombre*, which is drawn from *Human, All Too Human*), his distrust of the stereotype (F69/E43) thus suggests its profoundly Nietzschean origin.

Since Nietzsche writes in fragments and aphorisms, it is also easy to read him in fragments-to extract the pungent phrase, the epigrammatic formula, the striking, lapidary reconstruction or reversal of a conventional idea; it is easy to fall victim to this kind of "citatory" reading, the fragmentary writing inviting a fragmentary reading.

But *The Pleasure of the Text* is Nietzschean not only in its fragmentation and refusal of science. The new reading *The Pleasure of the Text* performs is not unlike the reevaluation of all values Nietzsche calls for; the word "value" in Barthes must always be tested against the Nietzschean use. The concept of nausea in the face of solidified metaphors, fixed values, stereotypes, etc., is taken up by Barthes (F69-70/E42-43, in the section called "Modeme"). The affirmation of the body as the sole guide ("Essential: to start from the body and employ it as a guide" [WP 532]) pervades every section of *The Pleasure of the Text*. The recognition that language is rhetoric, that truth is rhetoric, and thus solidified (consistant in Barthes's French) is a theme profoundly ingrained in both writers.

Barthes also believes that "nihilism is the only possible philosophy for our current situation" (GV 155), the new nihilism that is a void, an emptying out (GV 87), in short a deconstruction, just as the subject is deconstructed. The example of Japan teaches the collapse and decentering of signifieds, "the feeling of participating (of wanting to participate) in a period of history Nietzsche calls 'nihilism'" (GV 133). Nihilism is a semioclasm (GV 86). Many of Nietzsche's formulations on the art of the moderns, in The Will to Power, in the section "The Will to Power as Art," especially fragments 824, 837, and 838, stand behind the sections on the avantgarde and recuperation and stereotype and repetition in *The Pleasure of the Text*-see F65-67/E40-41, "Moderne"; F86-87/E54-55, "Récuperation"; F40/E23-24, "Échange."

Moreover, Roland Barthes is a latter-day Dionysian, one appropriate for *our* age, as Nietzsche's claimed to be for his and the Greeks' Dionysus for theirs. I believe there is a parallel between the Apollonian-Dionysian relation and the pleasure-rapture pair, in spite of the probability that there is no perfect correlation between rapture (which is how I translate *jouissance*) and the Dionysian (see nevertheless BT 7, p. 59: "the rapture of the Dionysian state"), nor between pleasure and the Apollonian: not unlike the Apollonian-Dionysian relation, the pleasure-rapture relation is uncertain (see FI0/E4 in "Babel" and F33-36/E19-21 in "Dire"). Where pleasure and rapture are most clearly opposed, however, as on F25-26/E14, F36-37/E21-22, and F82-83/E51-52, Barthes's formulations sound very much like echoes of the first seven sections of *The Birth of Tragedy*. This is a direction that readers can pursue.

In the section called "Phases" in RB 145, a concise tabular listing of his major works and their intertexts, Barthes places Nietzsche next to *The Pleasure of the Text* and Roland Barthes. Few have paid much attention to it. Perhaps they have simply looked away, the way *The Pleasure of the Text* does according to the opening "Affirmation," but in doing so they were willy-nilly Nietzschean, for that phrase, "I shall look away, that will henceforth be my sole negation," is from *The Gay Science*, and it continues: "some day I wish to be only a Yes-sayer."

Psychoanalysis is a major temptation for Barthes. It is simply a language Barthes speaks and writes. "My recourse to psychoanalytic language, as to all other idiolects, is ludic in nature, citatory. . . . One never owns a language. A language can only be borrowed, it 'passes around,' like an illness or currency" (GV 78). As a language, psychoanalysis is particularly appropriate for intertextuality, which can be described as the unconscious presence of other texts. The text as unconscious speaks of what we do not know of, and therein lies the rapture of the text. There is a psychoanalytic foundation for many of the paradoxical formulations, especially those about rapture, in *The Pleasure of the Text*, although this borrowed language is much less of an innovation than the borrowings from Nietzsche-in France, in 1973.

But it is of course a particular psychoanalytic discourse, the one dominated by Lacan's rereading of Freud (emphatically unlike the American psychoanalytic tradition that gives the ego a primary effectiveness). Especially frequent are references to split subject, perversion (of which fetishism is the favored example), the opposition of desire to demand, fading, fault, empty forms such as mana and the dummy in bridge, foreclosure and the economy of disavowal, the absent phallus, the imaginary, transgression and interdiction, the Oedipus complex, etc. This language is coherent; all these terms imply each other. The unconscious is an order founded principally on *jouissance*, according to the psychoanalyst Serge Leclaire (Psychanalyser, 126-27); rapture annuls, instigates the transgression (155). Many of the most difficult passages are difficult because they refer to this psychology.
And when Barthes resolutely requires his reader to think of himself as neurotic, as long as he is a reader (see F12-13/E5-6), he is placing the entire book in a psychoanalytical perspective: the typology of reading pleasures "could only be psychoanalytical, involving the relation of the reading neurosis to the hallucinated form of the text" (F99/E63, in my translation). In short, the Freudian and Lacanian intertexts supply a lexicon of concepts, which place *The Pleasure of the Text* in the light of the subject's place (which is a non-place). The terminology of the unconscious works well when applied to the reading process.

The intertext of ideological criticism is less new, in 1973, but no less compelling. It is a sort of old familiar discourse, a way of seeing, the resilient trace of the place Banhes has situated himself since the first-since *Writing Degree Zero*. (The Sartrian quality of the early Banhes leaves fleeting shadows on *The Pleasure of the Text*, even if sometimes in a negative form: "that the die is not cast, that there is a game" [F 11/E4, in my translation].) The Barthes of *Mythologies*, collected in 1957, is still alive here, deconstructing bourgeois ideologies and the imaginaries of ideology, wherever he finds them. Language has become a stereotype, used by everybody, including the masses (that is the meaning of "mass culture," opposed to "culture of the masses" [F63/E38], which would be the culture proper to the masses), but this stereotype has been imposed by the ideology that dominates: petit bourgeois ideology. In the face of Banhes' s reiterated refusal of a science of interpretation, the Althusserian model alone might have some validity: "the only acceptable scientific model is that of Marxist science as delineated by Althusser's studies of Marx; the 'epistemological break' he sets forth apropos of Marx shows us the science of today, and disengages science from ideology" (GV 131-32).

The psychoanalytic and the Nietzschean discourses are more vital and fresher in comparison, but the critique of ideology is nevertheless a persistent theme. Sollers, in "R. B.," has aptly described Barthes's Marxism: "It is also to R. B. that we owe, without being able to say that he has ever been a 'Marxist,' an offensivity that is the very spirit (if not the killing letter) of Marxism" (22). Perhaps there is a certain impatience with Marxism because it seeks truths, and because there is also a political stereotype that is hard to swallow (see "Moderne," F70-711E43-44). Worse, ideological analyses forget the rapture repressed by the political stereotype; they limit themselves to the analysis of the signified ("Mandarinat," F64/E39). Banhes would rather affirm the eruption of rapture even in a dull political text, as in Hugo's reading of political tracts by Darmès (F103/E65). The Left's moralistic misconstrual of pleasure as a residue of hedonism, a simple element, is no better nor worse than the Right's misconceptions, although different (F38-39/E2223). Though the Althusserian critique of the ideological subject stands behind some of the criticism here, Barthes fmally prefers the Brechtian Marxism, the only one that recognizes, indeed gives considerable importance to, pleasure. The pithy section headed "Politique" is epigrammatically conclusive: "The text is (ought to be) that impertinent person who shows his backside to *Father Politics*" (F84/E53, in my translation).

Barthes's immediate surrounding, in 1970 to 1973, enters into his text. "What Paris was doing" shows up in the form of Sollers, Kristeva, Sarduy (who was in Paris), and Bataille, as well as Deleuze and Derrida. Sollers, the only modern writer on whom Barthes has published a book, was a close friend. Banhes shares with the Sollers-*Tel Quel* texts the concepts of rupture, contestation of
ideology, Marxism, Maoism, and the 1968-style break with institutions, systems, and structures, especially or most visibly in language. With *Tel Quel* too Barthes holds that anything can be or have text; then the analysis of the written can be applied to the nonwritten, and vice versa. In fact, ecriture or writing, like text, migrates off the page into the world. Same principles, same practices, different results.
Kristeva is a highly respected voice in The Pleasure o/the Text, although she is more visible in Barthes's essay "The Theory of the Text" In "L'étrangère," written for the publication of *Semeiotiké*. *Recherches pour une sémanalyse* in 1969, Barthes writes: "Julia Kristeva changes the place of things: she always destroys the last prejudice, the one you thought you could be reassured by, could take pride in; what she displaces is the already-said, the déjà-dit, i.e. the instance of the signified, i.e. stupidity; what she subverts is authority-the authority of monologic science, of filiation" (RL 168). To Kristeva Barthes owes the word signifiance and its relation to jouissance, the concepts of genotext and phenotext, the formulation of the split subject in signifying practice, the historical subject, and the notion that the completed utterance is ideological and that the play of signifiers keeps ideology from creeping in.
Georges Bataille provided loss, expenditure, fear, display, Nietzschean laughter, examples of impossible texts and erotic texts, the third term, heterology, and several models of paradox, including boredom. Barthes "speaks Bataille" fluently.

Linguistics is a reference to which he looks for illustrations, especially Benveniste, Hjelmslev, Saussure, and Chomsky. Like the Nietzschean, the Freudian and Lacanian, and the Marxian, the linguistic is appropriated and made new: "You use a pseudo-linguistics, a metaphorical linguistics: not that grammatical concepts seek out images in order to express themselves, but just the contrary, because these concepts come to constitute allegories, a second language, whose abstraction is diverted to fictive ends" (RR 124). But *The Pleasure of the Text* stands in a somewhat uneasy relation to the linguistics typified by Benveniste's work, in that this is a linguistics of structures, closed forms, "magic monads" or instrumental writing, and because the written sentence runs the risk of being ideological. Hence the rather tangential assumption of linguistics here, and the appreciation of the "wonderful" Jesuit van Ginneken and his slightly crazy theory of "lactic phonemes" (F12/E5).

Finally, the Christian Mystics, Zen Buddhism, logothetes (Fourier, Sade), classical novels (by Flaubert, Proust, Zola, Balzac, Tolstoy, etc.), modern novels (by Sollers, Sarduy), and avant-garde art are frequent insertion points.

The traditional antecedent of intertextuality is influence, the modern evolution of which has taken the remarkable form Harold Bloom gave it in *The Anxiety of Influence*. This theory stands in a curious relation to Barthes's: it is hauntingly similar, and yet radically opposed. *The Pleasure of the Text* is an anxiety of influence *in reverse*.

There are superficial similarities. Like Barthes's book, Bloom's has no notes; it is intensely personal; it was published the same year; it is both a theory of intertextuality and an example of it. But in *The Pleasure of the Text* it is not an anxiety but a pleasure to be "influenced"; not a tension but a detente; not a melancholy but a delight; not a loss but a gain; not a destruction but an appropriation of property. All readers in Barthes are strong. In Bloom, everything in the book is "a unified meditation on the melancholy of the creative mind's desperate insistence upon priority" (13); in Barthes, everything is a *fragmented* meditation on the *delight* of the creative mind's *joyful refusal* of priority. For Bloom, poetic influence is "a destruction of desire" (38); for Barthes, it is an augmentation of desire. Bloom writes: "The anxiety of influence is an anxiety in expectation of being *flooded*. . .. Yet... every good reader properly *desires* to drown, but if the poet drowns, he will become *only a reader*" (57). Barthes could never have agreed with Bloom's tone, had he known this sentence: the reader is as creative and strong as the poet; it is in drowning-that is, in desiring and losing oneself in the other text-that the reader becomes a writer, which is the best form of reading. When Bloom writes that the history of fruitful poetic influence is a history of anxiety and self-saving caricature, of distortion, of perverse, willful revisionism, and that poetic influence always proceeds by a misreading, a creative correction, a misinterpretation (30), this is both like and different from *The Pleasure of the Text*. One necessarily reads distortingly, or misreads perversely, but such revision is not self-saving, it is not an anxiety, not a creative *correction*. There is pleasure for Barthes in writing intertextually; there is pleasure for his readers in reading intertextually. Anxiety has no part in any of this. Here then is a direction to pursue, toward a view of *The Pleasure of the Text* in a larger context.

The Pleasure of the Text is the juncture linking Lacan to Sollers, Freud to Kristeva, Nietzsche to Proust, Flaubert to Chomsky, Mallarme to Nietzsche, and so on to near infinity. It is the space for their encounter together, and their encounter with scores of others. *The Pleasure of the Text* is the happy union of all these voices, a happy Babel (F1O/E4), a logosphere full of reverie, joining peoples in solidarity rather than in a war of idioms (F47/E28). Barthes is the utopian or atopic space because that space is nowhere in Nietzsche or Lacan or Proust, but in their drifting intertextuality in Barthes.

A virulent, venomous critic of Barthes has chosen to describe this state of affairs, without recognizing it as intertextuality, in violent terms of insult. The concreteness of his metaphors would nevertheless have pleased Barthes. I quote the original and supply my own translation (which fails to match the punch of the French genius for insult): "Il a fait ainsi de son esprit un véritable capharnatim, une sorte de souk, de marché aux puces, de bazar rempli de balivernes, un bric-à-brac où l 'on trouve toutes les âneries à la mode, une espèce de foire àla brocante de la faribole snobinarde. Pour employer un mot qu'il affectionne, l'esprit de Roland Barthes 'fonctionne' comme une espèce de tamis, ou plutôt de filtre: il retient toutes les sottises qui sont dans l'air." Translation: "Thus he has made of his mind a veritable warehouse, a sort of souk, a flea market, a bazaar filled with balmy ideas, a second-hand store where one can find all the fashionable inanities, a sort of garage sale of hoity-toity ineptitudes. To use a word he likes to use, Roland Barthes's mind 'functions' like a kind of sifter, or rather a filter: it retains all the silly notions that are in the air" (Rene Pommier, *Roland Barthes Ras le Bol!* 27-28). With "intransigent

rationalism," Pommier decreed the foreclosure of the text and pleasure. The only way to turn this to pleasure is to read the terms intended as insult as terms of tribute.

In this astronomicallogosphere, the intertexts are the stars. Barthes starred Balzac's story *Sarrasine* in his lexematic reading in S/Z, by splitting it into small segments, by distributing its language among five codes, and by inserting stars in his own text before each readout of the codes (S/Z is marked by very noticeable stars). He called his rewriting of *Sarrasine* "le texte étoilé." But "etoile" also means disseminated in the firmament, exploded into fragments that may be the trace of an illusory and in any case always past whole -like the universe. The starry fragments in *The Pleasure of the Text* are the visible trace of an invisible and unattainable totality, which we can only postulate and which we would at no cost hope to reconstitute. *The Pleasure of the Text* explodes not only because it is fragmentary, not only because it asserts discontinuity at the price of order and structure, not only because it undermines every dialectic and every opinion, but also because of its intertextuality. Into the black hole of its ninety-nine large-print, spaced-out, short-*S/Z*ed pages in French, Le plaisir du texte crowded many times its own volume of intertexts. It is our pleasure as its readers to recognize in its dense weave the threads of these other texts, to unravel them and follow them outward in whatever direction they may lead.

The reader of the intertexts will see that most of them also go outward to ever-widening spirals of meaning, with no end in sight. Follow those threads, and they become more and more complex, interwoven: this is the very practice of signifiance, the shimmering of circulating signifiers. The intertexts listed here are only directions to start with, not end points. To identify intertexts is not to "finish" the unfinished book Barthes gave us, as one would finish a piece of unfinished furniture. The intertexts do not signal the origin and end of Barthes's thought in *The Pleasure of the Text*: they stand with that thought. "No final point to the text, no last word," wrote Barthes in his "Supplément"; the supplement is possible at any point, something new can always grow in the interstices of the text's tissue.

And yet, references to other writers, once they are identified and borne in mind, make Barthes' s book more serious. For instance, the second state of the materialist subject (F97/£61), the nearly incomprehensible "zero and its effacement," is a direct quotation from a book by Serge Leclaire, the paradoxical result of a lengthy elaboration; it is not a flight of fancy or a provocation, it is not some purposefully ambiguous concoction invented by Barthes. (Such criticism is often addressed to Barthes, especially from *The Pleasure of the Text* onwards; it is time to lay it to rest.) Barthes's brief and unmarked quotation opens his text to receive all of this intertext.

Indeed, when we listen to its intertexts, *The Pleasure of the Text* is a *different* book. It is richer and more coherent; it is less arbitrary than it seems, less capricious, less superficial, less loosely hedonistic, and yes, more theoretical (always bearing in mind that theoretical means *reflexive*: "But of course 'theoretical' doesn't mean 'abstract'; from my point of view, it means reflexive, i.e., turning back on itself: a discourse that looks back on itself is thereby a theoretical discourse" [GV 144]). It is reflexive in that the sections look back not only on themselves-and I show connections between them-but also on their intertexts. Its intertextuality understood, and the real paradoxes and originalities of the text all the more apparent, *The Pleasure of the Text* commands respect. It is not to be greeted with a sardonic smile, at best agreeing to indulge Barthes his little stylistic fantasies, his hedonistic exposé, his autoerotic raptures, as many reviews of the 1975 translation did. *The Pleasure of the Text* advances showing its mask, a mask that is all the more enticing when we know it is a mask. There is, after all, no treatise on *The Pleasure of the Text*, no treatise on writing except writing itself (F 14/£6).

Had Barthes lived to let the tissues grow, to ponder the programmatic knots, would he not have been much attracted by the current concept of hypertext? A kind of hyperspace travel among the ever more distant stars, tracing an unexpectedly direct route where none existed before, leaping huge distances with no expense of time, connecting the disconnected and disconnecting the connected, hypertextuality is the most recent avatar of intertextuality. If we were to write *The Pleasure of the Text* as hypertextually as possible, the treatise would be a completely new form of writing; its medium would be magnetic, its optics phosphorescent and ephemeral, its eye a mouse; reading it would be much closer to writing it, as the hand moves the mouse across the text to open the route to the next hypertext; there would be no last page, all pages leading to other pages; there would be no need for transitions, for order, structure, form-or they would be hidden; there would be no author. We would be in intertextual rapture-in *jouissance*.

¶

On Jouissance

Every translation is already an interpretation; it is therefore the translator's duty to interpret as much as possible in the vein of the original. Richard Miller's choice to translate jouissance as "bliss" was his most glaring failure; it is unfortunate that Anglophone readers continue to use the term.

The connotations of "rapture" are much closer to jouissance than are those of "bliss." A look at the Indo-European root as listed in the *American Heritage Dictionary* is encouraging: *rep-* is the root of more than a dozen words (some archaic) whose meanings nicely fit with *jouissance*. *Rap* (archaic) is to enchant or seize with rapture; rapt means transported with strong, noble emotion, etc., and comes from Latin *raptus* 'seized'; *rape* puts culture into pieces; rapacious includes a greedy possessiveness; *ravenous* comes from a verb meaning to seize prey, plunder; *ravish* used to mean to enrapture, as well as to seize by force and carry away; *surreptitious* nicely conveys clandestinity, one of the more surprising extensions of *jouissance*; *ravage* is to destroy; *ravishment* is entrancement, rapture; *rapid* well describes the eruption of *jouissance* in a text; archaic *rapine* is the forcible seizure of another's property. All these senses inhere in *jouissance*, as we shall see.

This appeal to etymology is of course Barthesian: "in etymology it is not the truth or the origin of the word which pleases him but rather the *effect of overdetermination* which it authorizes: the word is seen as a palimpsest: it then seems to me that I have ideas *on the level of language*" (RB 85). "Rapture" is overdetermined as much as *jouissance*, as long as we are authorized to see it on the level of language, which means retaining the various connotations within its broad range.

Jouissance is not just a French word with several overlapping, contradictory, and ambiguous meanings. In *Le plaisir du texte* it is a concept susceptible to diverse translation not only into other languages or langues (such as English) but also into other langages (such as music, literatures, criticism, psychoanalysis).- Its correct translation in the latter sense depends entirely on its translation in the former sense, for those to whom Barthes' s text is not accessible in French.

In the dictionary, *jouissance* is a polyvalent word with proper meanings in more than one domain. To be sure, it refers to the extreme of sexual pleasure, orgasm. But this does not exclude the word from polite conversation, where it can also simply mean a pleasure or pleasures that one might enjoy alone or share with others (which are also *réjouissances*). As the substantive fonn of the verb *jouir, jouissance* also has a legal

meaning, somewhat like the English enjoyment as in "the *enjoyment* of one's rights and property." In fact, *jouir* de followed by a noun means to enjoy in both that legal sense and in the common sense. *Jouir*, intransitive, means to experience orgasm. I might add that *le plaisir*, even though Barthes can oppose it to *la jouissance*, also euphemistically connoted sexual enjoyment, especially in classical literature, and that one can find such a reserve in Barthes's classical writing.

Although *jouissance* does not strike a particular tone as the English words "orgasm" or "coming" would, the noun and the verb can *include* that tone, and Barthes's other uses are never divorced from the sexual meaning. *Jouissance* is a sign that is more than a lexeme or a vocable: it is index, icon, connotation, and paradigm. From its lexematic core radiate other lexemes-such as rupture, cleavage, excess, loss, fault, orgasm, perversion, modernity, boredom, fear, swooning, euphoria, void, hysteria, signifiance. Some of these extensions of the word occur in the writings of other theoreticians, notably Kristeva, Bataille, and Lacan; others acquire their peculiar status only in Barthes's text.

This polyvalence makes the translator's task especially treacherous.

Besides the "simple" meanings of *jouissance*--pleasure, enjoyment, delight, and sexual pleasure-various contexts (a risk of limiting meaning) suggest different associations in *The Pleasure of the Text*. Rapture is linked with fault, cut, deflation, fading, interstice (F15/E7 and F23/E13)--in short, rupture. With Sarduy's *Cobra* (F17/E8), the excess of language is added to ruptures; when the text reaches the edge of verbal pleasure, to go beyond it is to be enraptured, that is, silent, unable to verbalize such excess; its excess is its will to rapture (F25/E13). The text of rapture imposes a profound wound on language itself, rather than on the content or the reading: perhaps a kind of rape (F22/E12). It causes a loss: the historical, cultural, psychological subject is rapt, raped, destroyed (F25-26/E14). *Jouissance* is also asocial, neutral (F28/E16, F63/E39); it is the intractable (F33/E19) that entrances and ties the reader to the world. It is a fainting, a disappearance (F33/E19); a jolt, a tremor (F34/E19) opposed to euphoria; it is a scandal, a limp, the trace of a cut, of an affirmation, not of a flowering (F35/E20). It is outside critical pleasure and can only be reached by another text of rapture, seizing the reader outside himself, and affirming its emptiness (F37-38/E22). It can even include boredom (F43/E25-26), or loss of heroism and value (F50/E30), or "chasteness," against the common view (F43/E25). It approaches the gratuitousness of death (F58/E35). It is the radical, revolutionary signifiance that remains a utopia (F63/E38-39). It is clandestinity (F63/E39), the surreptitious underside of the text, it explodes (F64/E39). It is the absolute new that invalidates conscience (F65/E40), the new word, the untenable discourse (F69-70/E43), the exception to the rule (F67/E41). It is the loss of the signified (F67/E41); it is the inscription, the syncope that bursts out or explodes (F68/E42), that stops up (F70/E43-44). It fragments names into pieces (F72/E44-45). It is close to fear (F77-78/E48-49), an unwritable fear that splits the subject. It is the extreme of perversion (F83/E52). It is premature, carried off all at once, in the first glance (F84/E53). It is a break, a subjective loss, clandestine place, atopia (F93/E59), it is uncultural (F99IE62), it is the hysterical reading that throws itself across the text (F100/E63). It is the rasping voice (F105/E67). With so many contexts, the meaning is exploded, not limited.

Translators of Lacan and Kristeva have retained the French word. Richard Howard, in translating *Roland Barthes*, used a variety of words-pleasure, enjoyment, delight, and bliss. But there is no doubt that *bliss* is a bad translation. Marital bliss? Heavenly bliss? Spiritual bliss? All are wrong, very wrong. Katherine Mansfield's wonderful short story "Bliss" approximates some of the qualities of *jouissance* to the extent that it depicts a happiness that cannot be pinned down or taken up by stereotyped discourse: it is unsayable, interdicted (see F36/E21, with its references to Lacan and Leclaire):

> What can you do if you are thirty and, turning the corner of your own street, you are overcome, suddenly, by a feeling of bliss-absolute bliss!-as though you'd suddenly swallowed a bright piece of that late afternoon sun and it burned in your bosom, sending out a little shower of sparks into every particle, into every finger and toe?..
> Oh, is there no way you can express it without being "drunk and disorderly"? How idiotic civilization is! (A *Pocket Book of Short Stories,* 78)

But even this enigmatic bliss, expressive of desire, lacks the polyvalence of Barthes' s *jouissance*-and it is too expressive of desire. The *American Heritage Dictionary* specifies that bliss is usually thought of as a tranquil state. It is a blessed peace, a calm, a celestial felicity. Nothing could be further removed from Barthes' s ideas of *jouissance*. Furthermore, "bliss" lacks the morphological polyvalence of *jouissance* that allows thinking of it actively: *la jouissance du texte* is an active, excessive *taking* of extreme enjoyment from the text, in addition to the feeling of rapture that the text proposes to the reader. On the condition that we remember the rapt in rapture, and test "the rapture of the text" against the "rape" of the text, rapture comes closest to *jouissance* in all its depth and volume.

I reject *ecstasy,* a word that exists in French and that lacks the requisite materialist connotations of possession or enjoyment, while it also leans toward a spiritual and hence idealist one; *orgasm*, too narrow, too univocal; *enjoyment*, too mild, too euphemistic, too cultural; *delight*, better, but also too cultural; and *joy,* too celestial, too expressive, and insufficiently opposable to pleasure.
To read *The Pleasure of the Text*-Qr any later Barthes-in English, keep in mind all the meanings of jouissance and rep-, whenever you encounter "bliss."

There are, besides *jouissance,* many other polyvalent words that any translation should struggle to emulate. Some are discussed in the Commentary. Moreover, Barthes's vocabulary, less idiosyncratic than many have thought, appropriates technical terms from his intertexts, many of which have been translated into English only recently. Some of these have gone unrecognized in the 1975 translation. Such terms should be understood, and hence translated, in the context of their intertexts.

Langue and langage pose a serious problem: both mean language, for us, but with nuances that we cannot express. Any nationallanguage is a *langue*; but *langue* is also tongue, both metaphorically and literally. And at least since Saussure *langue* is widely held to indicate language seen as a structure of relations.

Langage on the other hand may refer to specific types of discourse (e.g., the language of love) or the manner of speech of an individual or a group (the language of philosophers); but at the same time, it is just language in its ordinary sense, the faculty and practice of language. The reader of English will have to understand from the context.

Valeur means value, and it has Saussurean and Nietzschean valences throughout *The Pleasure of the Text*, but it also can mean valor. "Value" should trigger an evocation of "valor" in the reader's mind; the evaluation of words has a heroic, muscular, phallic dimension that rapture, drift, signifiance, atopia would counter.

The distinction between *dire* and *parler* as substantive infinitives tends to disappear among various English words such as speech, idiom, or jargon.
I have mentioned these words largely because they "flatten out" in translation, and flattening is thoroughly opposed to the ethic of *The Pleasure of the Text* (see F27-28/E15, in "Communauté").

Good readers of *The Pleasure of the Text* read it like a literary text, subjecting it to close analysis; it behooves us to start with an accurate text. One such reader writes that "Barthes uses throughout *The Pleasure of the Text* the language of film, talking as he does of 'cuts' and 'dissolves'" (Mary Bittner Wiseman, "Texts of Pleasure, Texts of Bliss," 57). But "dissolve" is Miller's translation of "fading," which has a Lacanian meaning, not a cinematic one (see F 15/E7 and intertext # 21). What then becomes of such an affirmation? Certain words form obstacles; but everything is significant, including ambiguities.

¶

On Reading *The Pleasure of the Text*

> *Profound explanations*. Whoever has given, of a passage from an author, an explanation that is *more profound* than the conception of it was has not explained his author, he has obscured him.
>
> The worst readers are those who proceed like plundering soldiers: they pick up a few things they can use, soil and confuse the rest. and blaspheme the whole.
> -Nietzsche

I am not sure Barthes would subscribe to this nasty aphorism from *Mixed Opinions and Maxims*. He has suggested our reading may be fragmentary. There is much to plunder in *The Pleasure of the Text*, and it is probable that every reader habitually picks up a few things that can be used, just by being a reader. No need to soil the rest and blaspheme the whole. Feel free to plunder my text as well.

As for "profound explanations," quite candidly, I think we can fall into error as soon as we yield to the desire to interpret this text. Not because there is a "right" reading that we might miss, of course, but because an interpretation limits and closes. My Commentaries are merely readings. I wrote them after I had translated the entire text and after I had read all the intertexts I mention here (and many other books as well). Many passages had remained ambiguous until that double discovery process was ended (to the extent that I could put an end to it at all). Naturally, my reader may disagree.

Those who are familiar with *The Pleasure of the Text* know that the sections, separated by little mounds of stars, bear titles. But these names are removed from the text and displaced to the end (in French) or the beginning (in English), unlike the later *Roland Barthes*. Furthermore, it often seems that the titles do not "entitle" the sections. Yet reading with the intertexts, and carefully, you will see that each section is in fact a meditation on the topic. Within sections, there are secondary subdivisions that are significant; they are marked by breaks in the page. Some of these are in several paragraphs. Barthes uses different strategies to organize such units. Some give an example, followed by a "lesson," or vice versa; some have a theme, a development, a coda; some propose a thesis, antithesis, and the elusive third term (not a synthesis, but the return of the spiral at the next level, the third hand in the game of hands upon hands, the displacement onto another signifier). Some quote, agree or disagree, assume or reject, and reform the quotation. Some are simple exposition.

Thus the typography is "phonological" and not phonetic. Yet the book is a fragmented body-*le corps morcelé*-and this leads to the temptation to put the body together again, in a different organization. Should one yield to this temptation? If one did, it would be to practice the third reading Barthes wrote about in "On Reading" (RL 40-41): the reading that gives the desire to write, to write what the writer has already written. In any case, we do this mentally, in recalling a previously read passage. This is the reader's organization.

The origin of fragmentary writing is Sade's text, Barthes claims. For *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, preparing "Sade II" after "Sade I," Barthes reread his notes: "And so, with' Sade II,' what is interesting is the decision to write a fragmented Sade, a decision related to the Sadean text itself. I'm very interested in these chopped-up repetitions" (GV 168). Yet if the practice of fragmentary writing began here, in 1971, it had long since been in Barthes's mind in theory. In the December 1963 introduction to *Critical Essays*, Barthes had listed the fragment among the techniques literature can employ to keep the nameable at a distance, to make the text "unexpress the expressible." The fragment allows one to restrain meaning the better to let it explode in different directions (CE xvii-xviii). The fragments are not the opposite of totality (connected to totalitarianism for Barthes), but of *la nappe*-the continuous, smooth texture or tissue (*Prétexte* 220). Writing about Sollers's novel H the same year as *The Pleasure of the Text*, Barthes justified the fragments of his essay thus: "They alone, it can be hoped, will prevent the production in the commentary of this 'fantasma of unity' that H precisely sets out to dissolve. The recourse to fragments (remember that they are always there to *avoid* an unwanted consistency) dispenses me from having a thesis to put forward on Sollers's work, a reference to prepare" ("Over Your Shoulder," WS 84-85). Precisely that is the reason Barthes has recourse to fragments in *The Pleasure of the Text*. It is a resistance to the ideological.

There are other reasons. "Liking to find, to write *beginnings*, he tends to multiply this pleasure: that is why he writes fragments: so many fragments, so many beginnings, so many pleasures (but he doesn't like the ends: the risk of the rhetorical closure is too great: the fear of not being able to resist the last word)" (RB 94). The short thought does not mark a lack of things to say, or an insufficiency of saying, but a "deja-trop-ecrit," an "already-too-muchwritten," that Barthes would avoid, according to Frederic Berthet (*Prétexte* 353). The choice to "write fragmentary" is like the choice to write intertextual, for the intertextual always occurs in disseminative fragments.

Barthes says, about the fragments in *Roland Barthes*: "but the important thing is that these little networks not be connected, that they not slide into a single enormous network which would be the structure of the book, its meaning. It is in order to halt, to deflect, to divide this descent of discourse towards a destiny of the subject, that at certain moments the alphabet calls you to order (to disorder) and says: *Cut! Resume the story in another way* (but also, sometimes, for the same reason, you must break up the alphabet)" (RB 148). Many items are out of alphabetical order in *Roland Barthes*; in *The Pleasure of the Text*, only one break in the order occurs: "Commentaire" is in the wrong place, after "Corps": is it significant? Barthes's claim that "the alphabetical order erases everything, banishes every origin" (RB 148) at least guides us to the ideal he holds-if we are not always convinced. Yet the fact is that in spite of my intimate knowledge of the text, I sometimes cannot remember where a certain passage was, so the fragmentation may well be working the way Barthes wanted it to. Perhaps what happens really is a "circular reminiscence" (F59/E36, my translation), and we cannot put the fragmented body together again after all.

The fragmentary presentation of the book and the occultation of its learning do make a serious apprehension of the text problematic. This is a perversion in Barthes, a purposeful perversity, since it increases rapture-for him, and potentially for us to the extent that we throw ourselves across his text, that we enter into the bottomless,

truthless comedy of language (F1OO/E63), and speak in it and not about it (F37/E22), to the extent that we plagiarize it. Things that seem arbitrary, confused, contradictory, paradoxical are so because of this fragmentation, this mask, this submersion (or speleological loss, F22/E12) of so much material (which is how Barthes achieves the paradox he repeatedly aims for). In one of the last things he wrote he confessed his long-standing discomfort with a split between expressive and critical language, and in the latter between the various discourses of sociology, semiology, and psychoanalysis. His discomfort bears witness to the only sure thing: "a desperate resistance to any reductive system. For each time, having resorted to any such language to whatever degree, each time I felt it hardening [*consister*] and thereby tending to reduction and reprimand, I would gently leave it and seek elsewhere: I began to speak differently" (CL 8). To hear the different speaking, to dwell on the fragmenting, to see the mask, to un submerge Barthes is a pleasure.

Thus fragmentation opposes ideology. Ideology is a stumbling block to *pleasure*, and pleasure is the reflection that can combat ideology. It is by brandishing the word pleasure, in a theory of the text, that we can resist ideology: pleasure fragments ideology. *The Pleasure of the Text* tells us both what is wrong with ideology and what will take its place, once we have fought its adhesiveness and its solidification. Just as in "Nomination" the text fragments ideology into practices, not named, so *The Pleasure of the Text* fragments the text into segments arranged alphabetically. The way Barthes takes his pleasures in his intettexts is not necessarily by rewriting their central or characteristic themes or topics, as one might in a scholarly reference or citation. He reads and writes the way a fly flies in a room: he touches on what gives him pleasure, on what has become a pan of his body. There is an enduring image of Barthes writing a *fragment* on a *fiche*-a piece of paper one-fourth the *size* of his ordinary writing paper-and putting it into his *breast* pocket. (He always worked that way; already at the sanatorium, before writing his first book, he had put Michelet on fiches.) From *fiche* to *fétiche* there is only one syllable's distance: the fragmentary fiches close to his body are the fetish that guard against ideology.

I have said that *The Pleasure of the Text* is a theory of reading, which is the same as a theory of writing (there is no theory of the reading pleasures, other than writing itself). This assimilation assumes that the reader creates the text, the text is in the reader. As Banhes said in his 1975 essay "On Reading," the ultimate form of reading pleasure is wanting to write (RL 40-41): quite simply, *The Pleasure of the Text* should inspire you to write.

Writing is the chief focus of all Banhes's activity since *Writing Degree Zero,* but the *écriture* of that 1953 book is closer to the later *écrivance*. As Barthes explains in "Réponses" 103, *écriture* is "an enunciation (and not an utterance) through which the subject plays his division by dispersing himself, by throwing himself aslant [*en écharpe*] onto the stage of the blank page: a notion that owes little, henceforth, to the former 'style,' but a lot, as you know, to the double lighting of materialism (through the idea of productivity) and psychoanalysis (through the idea of the divided subject)." The accent is on the productivity of the act of writing, not on the product or writing as an existing utterance, and the reader is as much a split subject as the writer. But if you produce *écrivance*, the kind of quasi-scientific writing opposed to *écriture*, "you'll remain outside reading. You will not be part of an activity which displaces the reading subject through contact with the text, and so you will not displace the writing subject: you will be condemned to consider the subject who wrote the text under study as an *author* in the traditional sense of the word, a *subjectivity which expressed itself in a work*. The only remedy against this would be to rewrite the work" (GV 165).

Writing is not language in the ordinary sense: it is not there to communicate something else, to convey a message, to carry a second or secondary

meaning, or to represent something. It is of the order of saying "almost something" (*Prétexte 22)*, in which "almost" indicates an intensity. Writing does not reveal the secret, for instance, or hide the secret; it destroys the category opposing hidden and not hidden. So there is no similarity of "writing" to "analysis." "In writing, what is *too* present in speech (in a hysterical fashion) and too absent from transcription (in a castratory fashion), namely the body, returns, but along a path which is indirect, measured, musical, and, in a word, *right*, returning through pleasure, and not through the Imaginary (the image)" (GV7). Barthes never said it in so many words, but it is what is poetic ("indirect, measured, musical") about writing (though not necessarily poetry itself) that writes the body.

Barthes said more than once that he wrote "by subtraction" (F65/E40), and that the corrections he made while typing up his first drafts were "always made in the direction of ellipsis or elimination" (GV 325). *The Pleasure of the Text* has definitely passed through a process of subtraction; repression, suppression, or forgetting sometimes mark the insertion point of an intertext (see intertext # 186 with its reference to Ruysbroeck). Writing by subtraction augments pleasure, combats ideology, increases fragmentation, perhaps marks an evolution. Writing by subtraction is writing with the *body;* the two fingers that type up the second draft (see GV 179) lazily follow their own ideas-the body's idea is to shorten, whatever the original idea: "*The Pleasure of the Text* is that moment when my body pursues its own ideas-for my body does not have the same ideas as I" (F30/E17).

The subject of such a writing is thus a "living contradiction," always split, asocial, lost, perverse, neurotic, fictive, hallucinating, imaginary-but materialist. As a poststructuralist contribution to the critique of the subject, *The Pleasure of the Text* borrows both the traditional modern routes-Freud, Nietzsche, Marx-and contemporary ones-Sollers, Sarduy, Bataille, Lacan, Kristeva, contemporary art. It critiques the full subject of structurallinguistics, the definitions of the subject as the subject of the enunciation (it is impossible to say the rapture of the text). Thus one can read it as a contribution to a theory of the subject.

But mostly I read Barthes's book as an elaborate illustration of intertextuality in theory and in practice. It is not only the section titled "Inter-texte" that proposes a theory of intertextuality; one critic has mistakenly claimed that with the closing lines of that section Barthes rendered the concept inoperative, subverting any further research in the direction of dissemination (Hans-George Ruprecht, "Intertextualité," 16). Quite the opposite happens: intertextuality is theorized and illustrated on every page; the book proposes, willy-nilly, various models to imitate. All of *The Pleasure of the Text* is about intertextuality: the pleasure of receiving other texts in the text, a process every reader continues by reading.

What is perhaps the least consequential reading is the one that sees *The Pleasure of the Text* as a textbook on the erotics of reading, as a theory of erotics. Barthes's innovation is too easily mistaken for a carte blanche to interpret texts in terms of the erotics they may represent. This is fine, but facile; perhaps we should traverse it, as Barthes says of the monument of psychoanalysis (F92/E58). We need to know what we mean when we speak of an erotics of reading, which is hardly obvious. If it were to remain tied to its metaphoric vehicle, as a theory it would not take us far-just as the pleasure of sex dies quickly, so would *The Pleasure of the Text*, and there is overwhelming evidence to the contrary. If the erotics of reading means reading with the body, then what we should recognize is the presence of our own bodies as we read, and that means our intertextual reading.

The Pleasure of the Text is a pivotal point in Barthes's writing; everything that follows it can be read as stemming from it. It is present in all the Barthes that follows, as he

predicted: "I will perhaps work out this slim volume all my life, supplementing it from the inside" ("Supplément").

I see *The Pleasure of the Text* as the theoretical (reflexive) formulation of a reading practice that Barthes "found" in writing the essays that became *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*. It is the theory after the fact, with the accent displaced from the "message" to the reading process. Indeed, the first version of the pleasure/rapture terminology is in the preface to this 1971 book. This practice of reading in the body, this fragmented, voluptuous writing, this celebration of pleasure make *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* a key book, perhaps the single most important moment, in *The Pleasure of the Text* (which is hardly an ironic expression, as one reviewer thinks; *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* proves it is not, if so far *The Pleasure of the Text* has failed to).

In its view of the literary text, *The Pleasure of the Text* grows from and goes beyond S/Z (1970); it caITies the classical/modern opposition farther-or rather, deeper, to its roots-and begins to uproot it, leaving only a trace of what would have been a different book, a "lit crit" book. *The Pleasure of the Text* is perhaps Barthes ' s simultaneous farewell and homage to his pleasure in reading classical novels; it is his recognition that the future of that pleasure is in the hands of the avant-garde, for which he recognizes pleasure in the form of rapture, as it has percolated into literary criticism from psychoanalysis. Thus the 1973 book improves on the concept of the plural text by virtually overthrowing it, in asserting that signifiance is a shimmering of signifiers (signifiance is heading toward the ultimate development in Barthes: *le bruissement*, or rustle of language-see "The Rustle of Language," RL 76-79). It nearly ignores the concept of code, already very ambiguous in S/Z, and refers to it only to oppose it (violence is coded, F30/E15) or to make exceptions (Sade invents his very own code). With *The Pleasure of the Text* Barthes is finally free of structuralist reflexes; classification is not sure; dichotomies such as readable/writable falter and evaporate.

Like *S/Z, Empire of Signs* (1970) turned away from monocentrism, from signs with full meaning. In Japan, the center is empty; the signifier proliferates, the signified is a void; the signs, never "naturalized," made stereotypical, as *The Pleasure of the Text* will say, circulate freely, happily (see GV 99, 158). The empire of signs is a place of pleasure; pleasure circulates freely also in the pages of the book, in the empire of Barthes's signs, written and photographic, putting into practice the theory formulated later.

To the extent that eroticism is linked to love, and that people have come to think of *The Pleasure of the Text* as an erotics of reading (my own view is that this is the least enduring description of the book), one might expect *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* (1977) to complement by its illustrations what is theoretical in *The Pleasure of the Text*. For me, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* is the attempt to become a hysterical reader of the texts in the life of love (see "Sujet," F 100/E63), and the attempt is doomed. Perhaps that is because it is a book of desire, not pleasure (see F92/E58).

The book that stands the closest to *The Pleasure of the Text* is clearly *Roland Barthes*. This 1975 book sheds so much light that it is required reading. The important essays to read with *The Pleasure of the Text* are "From Work to Text" (1971), "The Theory of the Text" (1973), "The Division of Languages" (1973), "The Death of the Author" (1968), "The Reality Effect" (1968), "On Reading" (1975), "Digressions" (1971), and the essays on Proust, Flaubert, Stendhal, Requichot, Cy Twombly, Bataille, and Sollers.

This is Barthes' s most personal book, because he wrote it for his own pleasure rather than on commission. It is personal also in its "moves," its strategies. I am thinking especially of the "ramener-asoi"-the "bringing-back-to-oneself' -that the ingenious creators of *Le Roland-Barthes sans peine (Roland Barthes without Toil)* made into one of the cornerstones of their wicked parody of Barthes's writing (and of the Assimil method

of language learning). Michel-Antoine Burnier and Patrick Rambaud astutely notice the place in the post-*Pleasure-of-the-Text* Barthes occupied by the personal experience: experience as a guide to the pleasure of reading, "life" becoming the intelligence with which he reads. Here is a perfect example: in Italy, Barthes sees a train posted Milan-Leece and daydreams that he travels on it at night to wake up in the "sunny Italy" that the name Leece evokes in him (it is a city he does not know). From this daydream, in "life," Barthes comes to understand Stendhal's drive toward "la belle Italie." This is how the text of Stendhal is read by the body. The barriers between text and life fell with *The Pleasure of the Text*, and they remained down. His corporeal reading of Stendhal comes from the first page of "One Always Fails in Speaking of What One Loves" (RL 296-305), a thought-provoking title made all the more thought-provoking when one considers that chance made this essay the last Barthes wrote: the first page had been retyped, the second was found in his typewriter on February 25, 1980.

¶
The Gentlest Law

Ich liebe dieh, du sanftestes Gesetz.
-Rilke

And why law? *The Pleasure of the Text* was not a law, even the gentlest one, for Roland Barthes, but a theory (a reflection) and a practice. Yet for the next reader, *The Pleasure of the Text* can be gentle and lovable-let *The Pleasure of the Text* be the gentlest law for you. We would read Barthes differently than we have, if we were attentive to such a law. It was such an attention that governed my delight in finding Barthes' s intertexts here, further opening the horizon, expanding the law, making it both more gentle and more lovable. This the law should be for my reader too.

If the love of the gentlest law has stayed in my mind, it is because of Paul de Man, who read Rilke' s poem during a lecture on December 9, 1971. This *listening*, this *hearing*, gave me an ineffable, indefinable pleasure. To this date I don't know why-perhaps a grain of his voice, for the pleasure remains with his speaking, and not in the now published text on Rilke. The seeds of a pleasurable relation to the text were planted there for me, strong and sturdy enough to subtend and support my entire reading activity since. For as I read intertextually, my pleasure increases, and it seems to me that this is the ultimate value against which there is no argument.

Armine Kotin Mortimer
The Gentlest Law
Roland Barthes's *The Pleasure of the Text*

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