

This is a transcript of the texts

Literature bores me, especially great literature.

John Berryman (1914-1972) U.S. poet

Literature that is not the breath of contemporary society, that dares not transmit the pains and fears of that society, that does not warn in time against threatening moral and social dangers – such literature does not deserve the name of literature; it is only a façade. Such literature loses the confidence of its own people, and its published works are used as wastepaper instead of being read.

Alexander Solzhenitsyn (b. 1918) Russian novelist.

Literature is the one place in any society where, within the secrecy of our own heads, we can hear voices talking about everything in every possible way. The reason for ensuring that that privileged arena is preserved is not that writers want the absolute freedom to say and do whatever they please. It is that we, all of us, readers and writers and citizens and generals and goodmen, need that little, unimportant-looking room. We do not need to call it sacred, but we do need to remember that it is necessary.

Salman Rushdie (b. 1947) Indian-born British author.

Literature is analysis after the event.

Doris Lessing (b. 1919) British novelist.

Literature gives us a memory of lives we did not lead.

Mason Cooley (b. 1927) U.S. Aphorist.

All...forms of consensus about “great ” books and “perennial problems, once stabilized, tend to deteriorate eventually into something philistine. The real life of the mind is always at the frontiers of “what is already know.” Those great don’t books don’t only need custodians and transmitters. To stay alive, they also need adversaries. The most interesting ideas are heresies.

Susan Sontag (b. 1933) U.S. essayist.

Literature is the art of writing something that will be read twice; journalism what will be grasped twice.

Harold Bloom (b. 1930) U.S. educator and author.

Literature is news that STAYS news.

Ezra Pound (1885-1972) U.S. poet, critic.

