Goethe

Journal Entries

**- No state can endure the condition of being armed and on the defensive.**

**- Nothing is sadder than to watch the absolute urge for the unconditional in this altogether conditional world.**

**- Majesty is the possibility and power to do right or wrong without regard to reward or punishment.**

**- To rule and to enjoy dont go together. To enjoy means to belong light-heartedly to oneself and to others; to rule means to do good in the most seriously purposeful way to oneself and to others.**

**- If you have clear concepts, you know how to give orders.**

**- 'Let them sing, if only they pay up!' said Mazarin when he was shown satirical songs about a new tax.**

**- Equality is what I want to find in society; liberty, that is, moral liberty, my willingness to submit, this is my own personal contribution.**

**- Imaginary equality, the first way to show inequality in action.**

**- Some people are proud about what they know; about what they dont know, they are arrogant.**

**- If there's some matter which displeases me, I just leave it alone or make a better job of it.**

**- People think one ought to be busy with them when one isnt busy with oneself.**

**- The very worst kind of culture a man can give himself is the conviction that other people dont take any notice of him.**

**- In the ideal realm all depends on bursts of enthusiasm; in the real world what matters is perseverance.**

**- Clever people find life easy when fools find it hard, and often it's hard for the clever and easy for the fool.**

**- The lives of many people consist of gossip, action and intrigue, all in aid of momentary efffects.**

**- The whole of life consists of**

**wanting and not-succeeding,**

**succeeding and not-wanting.**

**- He who looks ahead is lord of the day.**

**- A day belong to the domain of error and mistakes, a sequence of time to success and achievement.**

**- The present moment is a sort of public: you have to deceive it so that it imagines you are doing something; then it leaves you alone and secrectly gets on with what its descendants with surely view with astonishment.**

**- Try to consolidate your own authority: it is established wherever there is mastery.**

**- The person who wants to do better than everybody else is generally deceiving himself: he is just doing all he can and then is pleased to fancy that this is as much and more than everybody else can do.**

**- You never go further than when you no longer know where you are going.**

**- The present world does not deserve that we should do anything for it; for the world as it now is can disappear in a moment. We must work for the world that is gone and for the one yet to come; for the former as to recognize its due merit, for the latter so that we may strive to heighten its worth.**

**- For the process of destruction all false arguments are valid, but by no means for that of construction. What is true does not construct.**

**- Do not ask whether we are in complete agreement, but whether we are acting with one mind.**

**- Who can say he is learning by experience if he is not the kind of person who does, in fact, have experiences?**

**- There are many people who imagine that what they experience they also understand.**

**- For surely everyone only hears what he understands.**

**- It's irrelevant whether what one says is true and false: both will be contradicted.**

**- There are people who ponder about their friends' shortcomings: there's nothing to be gained by that. I have always been on the look-out for the merits of my opponents and this has been rewarding.**

**- Everybody puts up with what is absurd, false, because it insinuates itself; this doesn't apply to what is true, outspoken, because it excludes.**

**- Even a truth, repeated, loses its charm, but an error repeated is altogether revolting.**

**- The whole year round I hear everybody talk in ways counter to my own opinions; so why shouldnt I say what I think for once in a while?**

**- I'm on good terms with all the people who are my immediate concern, and as to the rest, I wont go on putting up with things from them, and thats the end of the matter.**

**- Appreciation is the true form of liberality.**

**- Tolerance should really only be a passing attitude: it should lead to appreciation. To tolerate is to offend.**

**- Of merit one demands modesty; but those who ostentatiously run down merit are listened to with relish.**

**- Why do we hear such everlastingly negative talk! People all imagine they'll be giving something away if they recognize the least bit of merit.**

**- A person doesnt reveal his character until he talks about a great man or about something extraordinary. This is the real touchstone that shows up base copper metal.**

**- It is stupid to run down your enemy before his death, infamous to do it after your victory.**

**- There is no art in turning a goddess into a witch, a virgin into a whore, but the opposite operation, to give dignity to what has been scorned, to make the degraded desirable, that calls either for art or for character.**

**- Dont say you want to give, but go ahead and give! You'll never catch up with a mere hope.**

**- When two people are really happy about one another, one can generally assume that they are mistaken.**

**- IT is better to be deceived in one's friends rather than deceiving one's friends.**

**- You only know those who cause you suffering.**

**- He who doesnt see his lover's faults as virtues is not in love.**

**- Man is not only what he was born with, but what he has attained.**

**- It is better that there should be acts of injustice than that they should be unjustly remedied.**

**- Duty: where one loves what one orders oneself to do.**

**- IF a good word finds a good home, as the saying goes, then a pious word finds an even better one.**

**- "My supreme desire is to be aware inwardly, as it were in my inner self, of the God I find everywhere outside myself."**

**- One can recognize the usefulness of an idea and yet fail to understand just how to make the best use of it.**

**- 'In the spring and autumn one doesnt easily think about a fire on the hearth, and yet if we happen to see one in passing, we find the feeling it gives us so pleasant that we want to linger. This might be seen as analogous to any temptation.**

**- In the end all depends on attitudes: where there are mental attitudes, ideas follow, and ideas are in keeping with attitudes.**

**- The most attractive mark of originality is knowing how to develop a received idea so creatively that no one can easily guess how much lies hidden within it.**

**- 'May they perish, all those who said before us what we are saying now!'**

**- His attitude to his wife as to the world in general is worth noting: 'I have not made use of my misery like a wise man.'**

**- A free soul like his runs the danger of rudeness unless noble benevolence establishes moral balance.**

**- The world in any case forces general education on us, so we dont really trouble to acquire it; special knowledge depends on our own efforts.**

**- Even people of sensitive understanding fail to realize that they are trying to explain basic experiences the thought of which ought, in fact, to reassure and calm us.**

**- By the time you have managed to take due note of everything, you have lost your own self.**

**- Art and learning are words so often used and whose precise difference is so rarely understood, the one is often used for the other.**

**- Respecting ourselves determines our moral; valuing others rules our behaviour.**

**- Courage and modesty are the least ambiguous virtues; for they are of a kind that hypocrisy cannot mime. They also have in common the fact that they find expression in a similar colouring.**

**- It is better to do the most unimportant thing in the world than to look on half an hour as unimportant.**

**- If one could store time as one can store ready money without using it.....?**

**- Nothing in the world except health and virtue is more to be treasured than knowledge and learning; nor is anything so easily attainable and so cheap to acquire: all you have to do is to be still, all you have to spend is time, something we cannot save in any other way than by spending it.**

**- What are tragedies but versified passions of people who make goodness knows what of external circumstances?**

**- Poetical talent is given to the peasant just as to the knight; what matters is that each should make the best of his condition and treat it with dignity.**

**- The kind of woman who can replace her children's father, should he not be there, is considered the most excellent.**

**- What I really know, I know only for myself; an uttered word is seldom of constructive value: it mostly leads to contradiction, hesitation and to a standstill.**

**- 'Why shouldnt there be such things as invisible worlds?' And wasnt he perfectly right? Are not the newly discovered planets invisible to the whole world, except for the few astronomers to whose word and calculation we have to give credence?**

**- The history of philosophy, of the sciences, of religion, all show that opinions are spread abroad on a quantitative scale and that the leading position always goes to what is easier to grasp, that is, to whatever is easier and more comfortable for the human spirit. Indeed, the man who has fully educated and developed himself in a higher sense can always reckon to have the majority against him.**

**- He then remains equally calm when the majority is on his side as when he finds himself in a minority; for he has done his part: he has expressed his conviction, he is not lord over minds and attitudes.**

**- True sages ask what a matter is in itself and in relation to other matters, and they are unconcerned about its usefulness, that is, the way it can be applied to what is familiar and necessary for life; for all that kind of thini will, in due course, be discovered by minds of quite different case, by sharp-witted people who revel in life, have technical expertise and are versatile.**

**- About any new important matter the crowd always asks what use it is, nor is this unwarranted; for it is only by its usefulness that the crowd can come to understand the value of anything.**

**- Scholarly knowledge tends, on the whole, to be remote from life and only returns to it via a detour.**

**- When you praise someone, you are putting yourself on a par with him.**

**- It is not the discerning man who governs, but discernment; not the reasonable man, but reason.**

**- All laws are made by the old and by men. Young people and womenfolk want the exception, the old want the rule.**

**- We dont ask by what right we rule: we simply rule. We are not concerned whether people have any right to depose us: we just take care that they are not tempted to do it.**

**- The legislator must hear 'peoplehood', not 'the people'. The former always voices the same thing, is reasonable, consistent, clear and true; the latter, because of much wanting, never knows what it wants.**

**- One is never deceived, one deceives oneself.**

**- The Schoolman trying his hand at writing and speaking Latin sees himself as more elevated and distinguised than he is allowed to be in his everyday life.**

**- For if we look upon Antiquity with the firm intention of educating ourselves, we are rewarded by the feeling that this is really the beginning of our true humanity.**

**- Know Thyself in the simplest interpretation means to pay some attention to yourself, watch what you are doing so that you come to realize how you stand vis-a-vis your fellows and the world in general.**

**- Geometry in its initial elements in Euclid, is the most perfect introduction to philosophy.**

**- It is rare even for a man of the greatest age to come to see himself as historical, or for his contemporaries to be seen as historical by him; the result is that there is no one left with whom he is either inclined or able to enter into argument.**

**- To begin with, experience is of use to science, then it does damage because experience leads to an awareness of law and exception. Drawing the average between them by no means results in truth.**

**- There are people who have no capacity for abstract thinking make bold to theorize, not grasping the fact that however much knowledge they have, this does not entitle them to theorize. Common sense engaged in activity will rarely go astray; more complex thinking, inference and judgement are not, however, its business.**

**- It is not language in itself that is correct, effective, graceful; it is the spirit embodied within language; so it is not a matter of an individual's power of choice whether he wants to imbue his calculations, his speeches or poems with desirable qualities. In the intellect, it is the capacity to contemplate and perceive.**

**- What is exact about mathematics except exactitude?**

**- A really incisive lawyer defending a just cause, a thoroughly perceptive mathematician contemplating the star-filled sky are both god-like.**

**- Mathematics may be calculating pennies or guineas, rhetoric defending truth or falsehood, its all the same to both of them. Nothing is of value to them except form: content is a matter of indifference.**

**- Nothing is more disagreeable than a majority: for it consists of a few powerful people in the lead, rogues who are adaptable, weak people who assimilate with the rest, and the crowd that trundles along behind without the slightest notion of what it's after.**

**- What is false has the advantage that it can always be the subject of gossipy chat; what is true has to be put to immediate use, else it isnt there.**

**- If some people hadnt felt obliged to repeat what is untrue simply because they had at one point maintained it, they would have turned into quite different people.**

**- The craziest thing is that everyone imagines he has got to pass on what people have imagined they knew.**

**- Our fault is that we cast doubt on what is certain and would like to pin down what is uncertain. Rather, we ought to keep hold of what is certain and watch out for what is uncertain.**

**- You dont have to travel all round the world in order to understand that the sky is blue everywhere.**

**- Man must persist in the belief that the incomprehensible is, in fact, comprehensible; else he would cease to do research.**

**- Reason is dependent on what is coming into being, understanding depends on what is already there; the former in unconcerned about 'what for?', the latter doesnt ask 'where from?' Reason rejoices in the process of development; understanding wants to keep hold of everything so as to put it to use.**

**- It is always better for us to say straight out what we think without wanting to prove much; for all the proofs we put forward are really just variations on our own opinions, and people who are otherwise minded listen neither to one nor to the other.**

**- Stand firm where you are.**

**- Authoritative confirmation that something has in fact already happened, been said or decided in the past, is of great value; but only the pedant insists on authority at every junction.**

**- There are two peaceful powers: law and decency.**

**- Every great idea, as soon as it makes it appearance, has a tyrannical effect.**

**- We mustn't scorn thinking that proceeds by way of analogies: analogy has the advantage of not closing doors or in fact aiming at any ultimate solution; the kind of inductive thinking, on the other hand, which has a preconceived purpose in view and is working towards it is damaging in that it sweeps both falsehood and truth along with it.**

**- One who is content just to experience life and act accordingly has all the truth he needs. This is the wisdom of the growing child.**

**- If you can read, you should understand; if you can write, you have to know something; if you can believe, you ought to comprehend; if you desire, you will feel an obligation; if you demand, you will not get what you want; and if you are experienced, you ought to make yourself useful.**

**- It is our greatest good fortune to have our failings corrected and our faults adjusted.**

**- A duty absolved still feels like an unpaid debt, because one can never quite live up one's expectations.**

**- Everything that liberates our mind without at the same time imparting self-control is pernicious.**

**- We would know much more about things if we werent intent on discerning them too precisely. For, surely, an object can only be comprehensible to us when viewed at an angle of forty-five degrees.**

**- One has to remember that there are quite a lot of people who would like to say something significant without being productive, and then the most peculiar things see the light of day.**

**- To find and to appreciate goodness everywhere is the sign of a love of truth.**

**- Comparison by the unknowing is really only a lazy and conceited way of avoiding judgement.**

**- We tolerate the worst portrayal because we are used to seeing even worse originals.**

**- As one grows older, the most innocent talk and action grow in significance, and to those I see around me for any length of time I always try to point out the shades of difference between sincerity, frankness and indiscretion, and that there is really no difference between them, but just an intangible transition from the most harmless comment to the most damaging, and that this subtle transition has to be observed or indeed felt.**

**- How good of him if nature has endowed him with a moderate and calm attitude so that he makes no disproportionate claims on the world nor yet allows it to determine his course!**

**- The greatest evil of our time - which lets nothing come to fruition - is, that one moment consumes the next, wastes the day within that same day and so is always living from hand to mouth without achieving anything of substance.**

**- How is a young man independently to reach the insight that what everyone else pursues, approves and furthers may be reprehensible and damaging? Why shouldnt he let himself and his own natural disposition go the same way?**

**- A great failing: to see yourself as more than you are and to value yourself at less than your true worth.**

**- Botanists have a plant-category which they call 'Incomplete', similarly one can say that there are incomplete people. These are the ones whose longings and strivings are out of porportion with what they actually do and what they achieve.**

**- 'You dont play the flute just by blowing - you've got to move your fingers.'**

**- We own not just what we are born with, but also what we can acquire, and this is what we are.**

**- What we think out, what we undertake, should have achieved such perfect clarity and beauty that anything the world could do to it could only spoil it; this would leave us with the advantage of only having to adjust what has been misplaced and refashion what has been destroyed.**

**- People are at a loss with regard to themselves and one another because they use means as ends, and then, because of sheer busyness, nothing whatever happens or perhaps, even worse, something which is disagreeable.**

**- In the works of man, as in those of nature, what most deserves notice is his intention.**

**- Every individual must think in his own personal way; for on his way he always finds a truth or a kind of truth which helps him get through life. But he mustn't let himself go, he has got to keep a check on himself; purely naked instinct is unseemly.**

**- Tell me with whom you consort and I will tell you who you are; if I know how you spend your time, then I know what might become of you.**

**- What is not properly started, can never be finished. The master of his art, by means of a few strokes, produces a finishsed work; fully worked out or not; it is already completed.**

**- The longer I love, the more depressing I find the spectacle of a man, whose optimal function is to be a lord over nature so as to free himself and his fellow from tyrannical necessity, doing the exact opposite of what he really wants to do, and all because of some preconceived false notion; and in the end, because the structure of the project as a whole has been ruined, he just muddles on miserably with odd details.**

**- The reasonable world is to be seen as a great individual not subject to mortality and forever bringing around what is needed, in this way even mastering chance events.**

**- Try to do your duty, and you'll soon discover what you are like. But What is your duty? The demands of the day.**

**- It is hard to come to terms with the errors of the times: if you oppose them, you stand alone; if you allow yourself to be caught up in them, you get neither honour nor joy in the process.**

**- It is not easily understood that things happen in the great sphere of nature exactly as they do in the smallest compass. If experience forces it on people, they in the end put up with it. Straw, attracted by a rubbed piece of amber, is cognate to the most terrific thunderstorm, indeed, it is one and the same phenomenon. We concede this relationship between small and great in a few other cases, but the pure spirit of nature soon abandons us and the demon of artificial constructionism seizes hold of us and manages to assert its validity everywhere.**

**- Everything that is alive surrounds itself with an atmosphere.**

**- Immediate perception of primeval phenomena makes us react with something akin to fear: we feel our inadequacy; it is only when they come alive through the eternal interplay of empiricism that we can react with joy.**

**- Even when a man has discovered the basic reason for the error, it does not mean that he has got rid of the error itself.**

**- Theories usually result from the percipitate reasoning of an impatient mind which would like to be rid of phenomena and replaces them with images, concepts, indeed often with mere words. One senses, possibly also realizes, that this is a makeshift; but doesnt passion and partiality always fall in love with makeshifts? And rightly so, because they are so greatly needed.**

**- Man cannot well get on existing on his own and this is why he likes to join a party, because this is where he finds, if not tranquility, at least composure and security.**

**- In the realm of nature, the dominant factors are motion and activity, in the realm of freedom it is predisposition and will.**

**- Every true insight in part of a sequence and leads to a sequence. It is a link in a great chain mounting creatively.**

**- Reasons for deduction are comparable to reasons for arrangement; both must be thought through completely, or else they are worthless.**

**- Art is the true mediator. To speak about art is an attempt to mediate the mediator, but all the same this has brought us much delight.**

**- Scholarly knowledge is greatly retarded by our preoccupation with what is not worth knowning and with what is unknowable.**

**- When we look back on our life we really only see it as something piecemeal, because our omissions and failures always surface first in our mind and dominate our actions and achievements.**

**- We very seldom satisfy ourselves; all the more consoling, therefore, to have satisfied others.**

**- The most attractive form of metempsychosis is when we see ourselves reappear in someone else.**

**- Experience is something we can all value, especially the man who is old and has time to think, to reflect; he has the confident, comfortable feeling that no one can rob him of this.**

**- In his old age, Cato was denounced in the law courts, and the chief point he made in his defense oration was that one couldnt plead one's case except before those with whom one had lived. And he is perfectly right: how is a jury to judge on permises which it simply has not got? How is it to take counsel about motives which are already far remote in time?**

**- The most important thing is, however, our own contemporary time, because it is most clearly mirrrored in us and we in it.**

**- One is not inclined to live with just anyone, and, similarly, one cant live for everyone. Whoever really grasps this can greatly esteem his friends and not hate or persecute his enemies: there are, in fact, few things of greater advantage than learning to appreciate the good points of your opponents: this gives you decided superiority over them.**

**- What friends do for us and with us is also a part of our living experience because it strengthens and furthers our personality.**

**- All love is connected with presence; what is agreeable to us by ts presence always shows itself to us when it is absent and constantly makes us want its renewed presence, and, when this wish is granted, is accompanied by lively delight; when this joy presists we are filled by an ever-equal happiness.**

**- Quite apart from the way passion dominates and fetters a person, he is also tied up in many necessary relationships. Whoever is unaware of these or wants to tranform them into love will inevitably become unhappy.**

**- All real and all half-poets make us so familiar with love that it would have become trivial had it not constantly and by its very nature renewed itself in full power and splendour.**

**- Art is the conveyor of the inexpressible; it therefore looks like folly again to attempt conveying it by words. But our effort to do this enriches our understanding in many ways, and this, in turn, is good for our potential.**

**- He who is and remains true to himself and to others has the most attractive quality of the greatest talents.**

**- The teacher should take his greatest pride into putting across the concepts of so many manifestations in such a way that the learners are made receptive to all that is good, beautiful, great, true, grasping it with joy when it comes upon them at the right moment. And then, without their noticing and knowing it, the basic idea from which it all proceeds would have become a living reality for them.**

**- An old person suffers the loss of one of the greatest human rights: he is no longer judged by his equals.**

**- You have to distance yourself from beauty and intelligence if you dont want to become their vessal.**

**- There is nothing more dreadful than active ignorance.**

**- Someone described a remarkable poem by one of the female sex as having more energy than enthusiasm, more character than content, more rhetoric than poetry, and, taking it all in all, there was something masculine about it.**

**- Of the best kind of society one used to say that its conversation is instructive, its silence formative.**

**- 'Vis superba formae.' [The superb strength of form.] An attractive formulation by Johannes Secundus.**

**- Shakespeare's finest dramas occasionally lack ease: they are something more than they should be, and precisely on that account they point to the great poet.**

**- One does not instruct by lecturing. However, you can and will teach, if your deeds help to give life to your judgement and your judgement life to your deeds.**

**- Which form of government is the best? Whichever teaches us to govern ourselves.**

**- We cannot get away from a contradiction in our own make-up, we must make an effort to reconcile it. If other people contradict us, thats not our concern, thats their business.**

**- You dont have to censure vulgarity; for this remains eternally true to itself.**

**- Everything excellent limits us momentarily because we feel unable to match up to it; only in so far as we subsequently accept it into our own culture, absorb it as belonging to our own mental and temperamental powers, do we come to love and value it.**

**- All those who reach a state of freedom put across their failings; strong people exeggerate, weak people negligent.**

**- Where common sense is lacking, both sexes think that what they covet is necessary and what pleases them is useful.**

**- Character often make a law out of weakness. Weak people though, imagine they would be happy if they were not subject to rule and dont feel that they are incapable of governing either themselves or others.**

**- We really only learn from books we cannot judge. The author of a book we could really judge ought surely to be learning from us.**

**- There is an enthusiastic way of reflecting which is of the greatest value, prodived only that you dont let it carry you away.**

**- Nothing in the human situation is as unstable or fleetig as power not born of its own strength.**

**- If you dont want to lift a stone on your own, you should leave it alone even when someone else is around.**

**- Mottoes point to what one hasnt got, what one is striving for. As is right and fitting, one keeps this constantly in view.**

**- It is natural enough that people should imagine they can still do what they were once able to do; that others imagine themselves capable of doing what they never could do is perhaps strange but not infrequent.**

**- Truth is contrary to our nature, not so error, and this for a very simgle reason: truth demands that we should recognize ourselves as limited, error flatters us that, in one way or another, we are unlimited.**

**- It is not at all hard to subordinate yourself; but when you are set on a declining course, in the descendant, how hard it is to admit that what is, in fact, below you is above you!**

**- We like to rate Antiquity higher than others, but not posterity. Its only a father who doesnt envy a son's talent.**

**- Among all peoples, the Greeks have dreamt life's dream most beautifully.**

**- Thought recur; convictions perpetuate themselves; circumstances pass by irretrievably.**

**- The subject-matter is visible to everyone, content is only discovered by him who has something to contribute, and form is a mystery to most.**

**- A certain measure of poetical talent is desirable for every German as the right way to cloak his condition, of whatever kind it may be, with a certain degree of worth and charm.**

**- There are people who love and seek out those like themselves, and then again, those who love and pursue their opposites.**

**- It's really a person's mistakes that make him endearing.**

**- In spite of all the incompleteness of the literary scene, we find repetitions multiplied a thousandfold, which shows how limited are man's mind and his destiny.**

**- Napoleon, who lived wholly in a realm of ideas, was, however, incapable of a conscious grasp of this realm; he completely repudiates everything ideological, in denying all reality while all the time eagerly intent on realizing it. But his clear, incorruptible intellect cannot bear a perpetual inner contradiction of this kind, and it is most important when he is, as it were, impelled to talk about this matter in a characteristic and most attractive way.**

**- I dont venture to talk about the absolute in a theoretical sense; I may, however, be allowed to state that anyone who has seen and recognized it as a phenomenon and always kept it in view will experience very great gain.**

**- Beauty can never be clear about itself.**

**- It is the most foolish of all errors for young people of good intelligence to imagine that they will forfeit their originality if they acknowledge truth already acknowledged by others.**

**- Clarity is a suitable distribution of light and shade.**

**- There is something magical about rhythem; it even makes usbelieve that the sublime is something of our own.**

**- Hatred is active displeasure, envy is passive; hence one need not be surprised that envy soon turns into hatred.**

**- There are people whom I wish well and would wish I could wish even better.**

**- Timon consulted someone about his children's education. 'Let them,' this man said, 'be taught matters they will never understand.'**

**- Do happy people imagine that an unhappy person should perish decently before them like a gladiator as the Roman rabble used to demand?**

**- Because he speaks, everyone believes that he can also speak about language.**

**- In the seventeenth century one's female lover was aptly termed 'man-intoxicator.'**

**- Books, too, have their life-experience which cannot be taken away from them.**

**Who never ate his bread with tears,**

**Who never sat weeping on his bed**

**Through long nights of sorrow,**

**He does not know you, O heavenly powers.**

**- I was intent on pursuing what is general until such time as I came to comprehend the achievement of outstanding people in what is particular.**

**- Excellence is unfathomable; tackle it in what way you will.**

**- A kindly old examiner whispers into a schoolboy's ear: ' you havent learnt anything as yet' and gives him a pass-mark.**

**- In every work of art, great or small, and down to the last smallest detail, everything depends on the initial conception.**

**- No intelligent man experiences a minor stupidity.**

**- 'give me where I stand!' / 'Take where you stand!' / Declare where you stand!**

**- Where we have to look for liberality is in people's attitudes and these are their feelings come to life. Attitudes, however, are seldom liberal because an attitude springs directly from the person, his immediate context and his needs.**

**- A call to posterity originates in the clear vital feeling that there is such a thing as permanence and that even if this is not immediately acknowledged it will, in the end, win the recognition of a minority and finally of a majority.**

**- One can not live for everyone, more especially not for those with whom who wouldnt care to live.**

**- If one had to study all laws, one would have no time at all to transgress them.**

**- A difference which gives reason nothing to register is not a difference.**

**- Knowing my attitude to myself and to the world outside me is what I call truth.**

**- There are people who never makes mistakes because they never have sensible projects.**

**- Intelligent people are always the best encyclopaedia.**

**- When people really deteriorate, their only contribution is malicous joy in the misfortune of others.**

**- Where concern is lost, memory fares likewise.**

**- It is no small matter to develop what is noble out of what is common, beauty out of what lacks form.**

**- A collection of anecdotes and maxims is the greatese treasure for a man of the world - as long as he knows how to weave the former into apposite points of the course of conversation, and to recall the latter on fitting occasions.**

**- Anyone who devotes himself to the sciences suffers, firstly through retardations and then through preoccupations. To begin with, people are reluctant to admit the value of what we are providing; later on they act as though they already knew what we might be able to provide.**

**- Word and image are correlatives which are always in quest of one another as metaphors and comparisons show us clearly enough. Thus, from of old, what is inwardly said or sung for the ear is at the same time intended for the eye. And so in ages which seem to us childlike, we see in codes of law and salvational doctrine, in bible and in primer, a continual balance of word and image. If they put into words what did not go into images, or formed an image of what could not be put into words, that was quite proper; but people often went wrong about this and used the spoken word instead of the pictorial image, which was the origin of those doubly wicked symbolically mystical monsters.**

**- We are all so blinkered that we always imagine we are right; and so we can imagine an extraordinary spirit, a person who not only makes a mistake but even enjoys being wrong.**

**- Ingratitude is always a kind of weakness. I have never known competent people to be ungrateful.**

**- I can promise to be candid, not, however, to be impartial.**

**- When a landscape is described as romantic, this means that there is a tranquil sense of the sublime in the form of the past, or, what amounts to the same, of solitude, remoteness, seclusion.**

**- Memoirs from above downwards, or from below upwards, they are always bound to meet.**

**- The crowd cannot do without efficient people and always finds efficiency burdensome.**

**- One who feels no love must learn to flatter, otherwise he wont make out.**

**- One should not wish anyone disagreeable conditions of life; but for him who is involved in them by chance, they are touchstones of character and of the most decisive value to man.**

**- The empirical-moral world consists largely of bad will and envy.**

**- However ordinary life may look, however readily it appears to put up with what is common, everyday, it yet goes on secretly nursing higher demands and looks round for ways of satisfying them.**

**- It used to happen, and still does, that I dislike a work of art because I am not up to appreciating it; but if I sense some merit there, I try to get at it and this often leads to the happiest discoveries: new qualities are revealed to me in these things, new capacities in myself.**

**- One phenomenon, one experiment, cannot prove anything; it is the link in a great chain, only valid in its context. If someone were to cover up a string of pearls and only show the most beautiful one, expecting us to believe that all the rest were like that, it is very unlikely that anyone would risk the deal.**

**- Surely we are here precisely so as to turn what passes into something that endures; but this is only possible if you can appreciate both.**

**- A person who doesnt rate himself too highly is worth much more than he imagines.**

**- Truth belongs to man, error to time. - 'The misery of the times caused his error but the strength of his soul delivered him from it with glory.'**

**- Hindus in the desert vow never to eat fish.**

**- The happiest man is one who can link the end of his life with its beginning.**

**- It is difficult to be tolerant about the present moment: an indifferent one bores us, a good one has to be carried, and a bad one dragged.**

**- Dirt glitters when the sun happens to shine.**

**- Our really and truly good deeds are mostly done clam, vi et precario [in secret, with great effort and precariously]**

**- The novel is a subjective epic in which the author begs permission to describe the world in his own way. So the only question is: does he have a way? - the rest will come in due course.**

**- We rightly describe as our masters those from whom we can go on learning. Not everyone from whom we learn deserves this title.**

**- Man would not be the most distinguished being on earth were he not too distinguished for it.**

**- A school of thought is to be viewed as a single individual who talks to himself for a hundred years and is quite extraordinarily pleased with himself, however silly he may be.**

**- Instead of contradicting my words, people should act according to my ideas.**

**- Let memory fail as long as our judgement remains intact when needed.**

**- Everyone manages to have just about enough strength left to act according to his convictions.**

**- Favour, as a symbol of sovereignity, is bestowed by weak people.**

**- Not everyone to whom we pass a striking insight uses it productively; he may take it as a quite well-known truth.**

**- What you dont understand, you dont possess.**

**- Events which are real by chance and in which, for the moment, we can discover neither a law of nature nor one of freedom may be termed common.**

**- Some people keep knocking at the wall with a hammer and imagine they are hitting the nail on the head every time.**

**- When a man reflects on his physical or moral state, he usually decides that he is ill. (but isnt feeling ill a form of health?)**

**- Anyone who doesnt know foreign languages knows nothing of his own.**

**- If people did not always want to put themselves on a par with others, they would know one another better.**

**- It is not easy for people to know one another, even with the best will and determination; for, moreover, there is bad will, which distorts everything.**

**- Whatever I have tried to do in the past by false tendencies I have in the end learnt to understand.**

**- The German is free in his thinking and that is why he fails to notice when he lacks freedom in matters of taste and of the spirit.**

**- If a person is to achieve all that others demand of him, he must consider himself more than he actually is.**

**- Quite often, as life goes on, when we feel completely secure as we go on our way, we suddenly notice that we are trapped in error, that we have allowed ourselves to be taken in by individuals, by objects, have dreamt up an affinity with them which immediately vanishes before our waking eye; and yet we cannot tear ourselves away, held fast by some power that seems incomprehensible to us. Sometimes, however, we become fully aware and realize that error as well as truth can move and spur us on to action. Now because action is always a decisive factor, something really good can result from an active error, because the effect of all that has been done reaches out into infinity. So though creative action is certainly always best, destroying what has been done is also not without happy consequence.**

**- Art is in itself noble; that is why the artist has no fear of what is common.**

**- The purely natural we describe as 'naive' in so far as it is morally pleasing. Reality, devoid of any moral aspect, is what we term common.**

**- Sowing is not as onerous as harvesting.**

**- Seeing difficulties handled with ease gives us a sight of the impossible.**

**- Even at the moment of highest bliss and of highest distress we need the artist.**

**- There is no way of more surely avoiding the world than by art, and it is by art that you form the surest link with it.**

**- Fools and intelligent people are equally undamaging. Half-fools and half-sages, these are the most dangerous of all.**

**- There is no greater consolation for mediocrity than the fact that genius is not immortal.**

**- There is something horrifying about a man of outstanding excellence of whom stupid people are proud.**

**- A person has only to say he is free and he immediately feels constrained. If he has the courage to say he is constrained, then he feels free.**

**- No one is more a slave than the one who thinks he is free without being free.**

**- We are never further away from our desires than when we imagine we possess what we desire.**

**- Voluntary dependence is the best of all states to be in, and how could this be possible without love!**

**- Individuality should actually be heightened by good manners. Importance is what everybody wants, but it is not be disturbing.**

**- What we call good conduct and manners is meant to achieve what could otherwise only be effected by force, or not even by force.**

**- We dont get to know people when they come to us. We have to go to them to discover how things stand.**

**- If we, however, have been visiting others and have seen them in their setting, in their ways, in their necessary unavoidable circumstances, how they operateor how they fit in, then we really must be obtuse and malevolent if we find laughable what is more senses than one should appear venerable.**

**- It is the way of the world to accept a person as he presents himself; but he does have to present himself. We would rather tolerate a difficult person than suffer one who is insignificant.**

**- Great passions are maladies without hope. What might heal them only makes them really dangerous.**

**- Passions are faults or virtues, only heightened ones.**

**- The man who understands finds almost everything laughable, the man of reason practically nothing.**

**- Sensuous man often laughs when there is nothing to laugh at. Whatever stimulates him, his inner contentment shows itself.**

**- The clearest indication of character is what people find laughable.**

**- Contradiction and flattery both make for poor conversation.**

**- Every spoken word evokes its contrary meaning.**

**- To communicate is natural; to accept what is communicated is an acquired art.**

**- None clamour for freedom of press except those who want to misuse it.**

**- In recent times Germans have assumed that freedom of the press is nothing more than being free to cast scorn on one another in public.**

**- As one grows older one must consciously, at some particular point, call a halt.**

**- To have timely insight, when you are young, into the advantages of age, and to preserve the advantages of youth when you are old - both are one and the same bliss.**

**- There is no self-deception when a young man has great expectations. But just as, in the past, he felt hope in his heart, so too he must look for fulfilment not outside himself but in his heart.**

**- 'I stumbled over the roots of a tree I had myself planted.' The forester who said that must have been an old man.**

**- Parents and children have no choice but to die either before or after one another, and in the end it's hard to tell which ought to be preferred.**

**- Truth (general), recognized and held by us;**

**Passion (specific), which hinders and holds us;**

**The third factor, what is rhetorical, vacillating between truth and passion.**

**- The most dreadful thing of all is when dull, incapable men team up with dreamers devorced from reality.**

**- The public wants to be treated like women: on no account must they be told anything except what they want to hear.**

**- The public would rather complain incessantly about how badly it is served than take any trouble to ensure better service.**

**- What is Classical is healthy; what is Romantic is sick.**

**- Ovid remained Classical even in his exile: he does not look for his distress in himself, but in his exile from the capital city of the world.**

**- ..bodies which rot while still physically alive and are edified by the detailed contemplation of their own decay, dead people who remain alive for the corruption of others and who nourish their deadness on living substance...**

**- Somebody said: 'Why do you bother about Homer? Especially since you dont understand him?" I dont understand the sun, the moon, the stars high above my head, and I recognize myself in them even as I look at them and contemplate their wonderful regular course, wondering as I gaze whether I too might one day come to some good.**

**- Eulenspiegel: all the main jokes of the book are based on the fact that everybody talks in figures of speech and Eulenspiegel understands all this literally.**

**- Fairytail: presents impossible events under possible or almost impossible conditions as though they were possible.**

**Novel: presents possible events under impossible or almost impossible conditions as though they were real.**

**- It takes genius to create a dramatic work. Sensibility is to be dominant at the end, reason in the middle and understanding at the beginning, while, throughout, all is to be declaimed evenly with the help of vividly clear imaginative power.**

**- When one is translating one has to go right up to the untranslatable; but it is only at this point that one actually discovers the foreign nation and the foreign language.**

**- It makes a big difference whether I read for enjoyment and stimulus or for knowledge and instruction.**

**- Longing which soars away into the distance, but confines its melody within itself, creates the minor key.**

**- Whoever wants to enter into an argument must be careful not to say things which no one is arguing about anyway.**

**- What makes things appear prettier? A favourable light.**

**- Precisely that which uneducated people single out as 'nature' in a work of art is not nature (from the outside), but a human being (nature from the inside).**

**- We know of no world except that in relation to human beings; we want no art except that which is the imprint of that relationship.**

**- He who was the first to fix the vanishing points of the manifold play of horizontal lines on to his horizon invented the principle of perspective.**

**- Look within yourselves and you will find everything, and rejoice that out there, by whatever name you may call it, there is nature which says an unconditional yes, assenting to all that you have found within yourselves.**

**- It is just as hard to learn something from models as from nature itself.**

**- Form as well as matter has to be digested, and it is in fact much harder to digest.**

**- Higher demands, even unfulfilled, are in themselves more worthy of esteem than lower demands completely fulfilled.**

**- One is only versatile if one strives (in real earnest) for the highest because one has to, and descends (for fun) to lesser levels because one wants to.**

**- It is more worthy to be a follower of whats great than a creator of whats vulgar, even in art.**

**- How hard an artist has to study if he is to see a peach as Huysum saw it! So shouldnt we make the attempt to see human beings as the Greeks saw them?**

**- The sound of music dies away but the harmony remains. The citizens of a town of this kind walk and work surrounded by eternal melodies; the spirit cannot sink, action cannot fall asleep, the eye takes over the functions, the due work, the duty of the ear, and on the most ordinary day the citizens feel they are in an ideal state; without taking thought, without inquiring into causes, they enter into the highest ethical and religious delight. Make a habit of walking up and down in St Peter's basilica and you will feel an analogue of what we have dared to put into words.**

**- Putting oneself on a par with objects in breadth means learning; understanding objects in depth means invention.**

**- What you invent you do with love; what you have learnt you do with certainty.**

**- No one can rob us of the joy of a first moment of perception, of discovery so called. But if we expect honour as well, this can be very minimal, for as a rule we're not the first.**

**- Together with standpoints when they disappear from the world, the viewed objects themselves are often lost. For, in a higher sense, one can say that the standpoint in the object.**

**- Two feelings most difficult to get over: to have found something that has already been found, and not to find something that one should have found.**

**- Thinking is more interesting than knowning, but not more interesting than contemplating.**

**- Where feeble intellects go wrong in their thinking is that they proceed immediately from the single factor to what is general, whereas it is only in totality that what is general can be sought.**

**- Not everything desirable is obtainable; not everything that can be known is knowable.**

**- Animals are taught by means of their organs; man teaches his organs and controls them.**

**- The senses dont deceive; judgement deceives.**

**- Man is sufficiently equipped for all truly earthly necessities if he trusts his senses and develops them in such a way that they go on being worthy of trust.**

**- Kant deliberately confines himself within a certain sphere and is always ironically pointing beyond it.**

**- Dialectic is the development of the spirit of contradiction which is given to man so that he can learn to recognize how things differ.**

**- A lively, gifted spirit, keeping as closely as possible with a practical intention to what is nearest of all, is the most excellent thing on earth.**

**- The greater our progress in experience, the closer we get to the unfathomable; and the more we are able to profit by experience, the more we realize that the unfathomable is of no practical use.**

**- A thinking man's greatest happiness is to have fathomed what can be fathomed and to revere in silence what cannot be fathomed.**

**- Everything is simpler than one can imagine, at the same time more involved than can be comprehended.**

**- Only he who finds empiricism irksome is driven to method.**

**- He who wants to defend what is false has every reason to tread softly and profess refined living. Whoever feels that right is on his side must tread boldly; being right in a courteous manner doesnt make sense.**

**- A great mistake which we make is that we always think of cause as being close to effect, as the bowstring is to the arrow which it speeds on its way; and yet we cannot avoid this mistake because cause and effect are always thought of together and are thus proximate in our thinking.**

**- I have never used induction on quiet research on my own as I realized its danger soon enough.**

**- Everything that comes into being looks for space and duration; that is why it forces another thing out of the way and shortens its chance of duration.**

**- Unknowledgeable people come up with questions which knowledgeable people answered as long as a thousand years ago.**

**- When we find something known to us explained via a different method, or possibly even in a foreign language, it takes on a curious charm of novelty and a fresh look.**

**- Wrong notion: that a phenomenon can be dismissed and put aside by means of calculus or by words.**

**- It does not by any means follow that the huntsman who shoots the deer must necessarily also be the cook who prepares it.**

**- It is true that human capacity to understand and reason is basic to language, but its use does not really presuppose clear understanding, developed reason and an upright will in the one using language. It is a tool that can be used to a purpose and arbitrarily; one can use it just as much for subtly confusing dialectics as for confused-shady mysticism.**

**- People are surprised that I know things better than they do, and no wonder, as they often consider wrong what I think.**

**- If people knew where what they are looking for is situated, they wouldnt be looking for it at all.**

**- In worldly matters, the only things to be considered are ways and means and tradition.**

**- As if, in order to procure some timely advantage for the son who lies in the cradle, one were to kill the father.**

**- The following are mad:**

**he who tries to teach simpletons,**

**contradicts the wise,**

**is moved by empty speeches,**

**believes whores,**

**entrusts secrets to the garrulous.**

**- A witty humorist is a kind of poet, who, mindful of his great knowledge and emotional power, feels impelled to express himself in metaphors.**

**- I find it marvellous to see tragic guilt, guilt so tragic that there is no need for a tragedy to follow it.**

**- Hersilie said about the mad pilgrim: 'When I want to lose my reason, a fancy which sometimes takes me, this would be the way.'**

**- The sublime, for us who are ultra-sublime, most worthy of veneration, and who yet, looked at closely, are tied to an absurd, indeed infamous, empiric nature - the sublime pulls us up short and makes decision difficult.**

**- Beauty presupposes a law that is made manifest.**

**- Everyone's persistance in character, right up to the summit of human existence, without any thought of return.**

**- To take pleasure in one's limitation is a miserable state to be in; to feel one's limitation in the presence of the best is indeed frightening, but this kind of fear elevates us.**

**- Function is existence thought of as action.**

**- ..things one would not talk about if one knew what is being discussed.**

**- knowing: what is significant in experience, and what always points towards generality.**

**- Actors win hearts and dont give away their own; they cheat, but do it with charm.**

**- He who acts as though he's glad, and is glad about what he has done, is happy.**

**- Impatience is punished ten times over by impatience; one wants to draw the goal closer and is only moving it further off.**