

various New Sun/Proust quotes (+ Napoleon)

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maa32 — 18 Aug 2003, 22:38

I was just finishing up Proust's Remembrance of Things Past, and was caught off guard by how many of my favorite Wolfe quotes come from book six (The Fugitive, in my translation). "Love is the only divinity", "All things that we consider imperishable tend to their own destruction", "Certain philosophers aver that the real world is a construction of the mind", "Time turns our lies into truth", eating a Chatelaine to invoke involuntary memory instead of a Madeleine cookie, etc.

I remember one debate that was innocuous enough last year in which we discussed Weer's answer to the riddle of Napoleon's hand in his coat from Peace. Proust offers a joking answer: Napoleon took liqourice tablets for his liver which stained his books, and the liver bothered him so much that he grabbed it all the time and eventually died of the ailment. If you look it up on the internet, most sites say that it was "fashionable" for a gentleman to hold his hand that way in portraits during Napoleon's time. My own crude theory back then was that Napoleon's documented erectile dysfunction occupied him at all times, especially on the battle field, where some residual excitement may have offered some solace to his condition. (A psychological Priapism in battle, perhaps?) In any case, does anyone think that Proust's explanation for the hand has anything to do with Alden Dennis Weer's explanation? It may be found in the beginning segments of Time Regained.

Just a few worthless bits ...
Marc Aramini