

Automatic Reading

>[Fr](#)

A surrealist approach as to criticism, may consist in giving up the "I" for the "game" (Fr. abandonner le « je » pour le « jeu »). In the sense that, what matters according to such an approach is not the content, the semantics of the text, but the free associations that it can make bloom in the reader's mind. A blooming that does not really occur "in the surrealist considered as an individual", since surrealists ordinarily have doubts about the existence and the nature of what ordinary people - or even the police and the justice system - call the "I", or the "me", but rather, so to say, a non located blooming. Even if it later requires judging the results of the blooming from one or more utilitarian viewpoints - or not at all.

A surrealist approach to reading can therefore be fairly close to that adopted in automatic writing. In other words, neither self-censorship nor censorship can be allowed to happen in automatic reading. Just as Rimbaud speaks of a de-regulation of all the senses (Fr. "dérèglement raisonné de tous les sens"), one could speak of de-reading (Fr. "dé-lire" and "délire" = "delirium").

The automatic reader is not an academic, he is not interested in what an author said, really said, or did not really say or did not say at all. He does not seek to elaborate any kind of truth intended to be taught.

He is only interested in the associations that the text will produce, whether "in him" or elsewhere. And he is not interested in these free associations due to the possibility that they may or may not be useful in artistic or poetical terms, but he is rather interested to *live* them. And since he is not an academic, he also does not feel particularly compelled to publish results either.



Eyes in the sky - Paréidolie - Zazie

The benefits that we can expect to gain from such an approach are manifold.

As a first step, automatic reading focuses on the text itself and does not show the slightest consideration for the author. It couldn't care less whether or not the author had talent or even genius, nor whether he was known or unknown.

The starting point of automatic reading is the text and nothing but the text. The text could well have "fallen from the sky" or have been discovered in the bottom of a trash can, or even worse, in a newspaper ...

In a second step, automatic reading abandons the text itself to its pitiful fate of being the slave of author's mind, and does not show the slightest interest as what the text is supposed to state, but only considers the associations of ideas it arouses.

As a result, the mind is thus freed from two particularly cumbersome and extremely harmful objects, the author and his supposed authority on the one hand and the text and its alleged meaning on the other.

If we consider the damage that the two above-mentioned noxious objects have caused to mankind over the course of history, we will agree that the gain is immense.

In Book religions, the author is assumed to be God, in other terms authority itself. Automatic reading of sacred texts returns the Author to His nothingness. Good riddance !

But automatic reading sends the sacred text itself to the same nothingness, and together with it, all the divergent and contradictory "canonical", "rational" interpretations of which we know that throughout history they caused the loss of entire peoples - and that they continue to do so.

In a movement of sovereignty of the mind, automatic reading returns the text to its original nature as *a simple mental landscape* from which all drifts become possible and actually, recommended. For the duration of the automatic reading activity, the text read automatically becomes *a simple pretext for free activity of the mind, the unconscious and chance*.

If the results of the automatic reading are recorded, the text produced by the recording becomes a completely independent text and normally no longer has any relation, neither with the text taken as a pretext, nor with its author.