

...the *Magic Mountain* in Lowe-Porter's translation. ...of the project of translating Barthes's *Comment* ...*emble*, the lecture course he began a week after ...gural lecture, which in English is titled *How to* ...*ther*. My copy of the novel is a bit battered now - ...r is creased. One long crease runs up the front of ...life-lin ... the bright cluster of buildings fore-

solitude, as Barthes puts it, with regular interruptions. What kinds of structures, spatial or temporal, would enable this? Where to look for suggestion and detail, for models and counter-models that could be simulated, or already find their part-equivalents, in life? As materials to think with, Barthes compiles this unlikely corpus - an unexpected collection of writings and novels: *The Magic* ... the text of the Desert Fathers.

...scaling the greyer, more distant peak ...n up and out into the white sky and ...edge of the book. *The Magic Mountain*, ...d sanatorium-living, is a key text for ...ture course, one of a small selection of ...*tes d'appui* as he calls them. Supporting ...t brace us, the ones we lean on, testing ...y'll support our weight; the texts we ...t in conversation with, whether direct- ...he texts that enable us to say or write ...very discourse, says Barthes, is gener- ...d by its own more or less idiosyncratic, ...mbered selection. This is not so much ...principle. 'There is an age at which we ...ow,' he'd said in the inaugural lecture, ...other age at which we teach what we do ...called research.' In this digressive, ex- ...('research, not a lecture,' he'll stress at ...st session), the practice was never to be ...systematic: to work or walk in a straight ...generalizing theory, an ultimate grand ...set down a fantasy. And then to induce ...a research project. The fantasy for this ...of living together that would accommo- ...a dictate the individual rhythms of its ...amunity. Allowing for something like

...account of the real-life sequestered woman of Poitiers. The inquiry will proceed sketchily, says Barthes. Each lecture will offer just a few lines of approach; open a few possible dossiers. I'll only be marking out the contours of these zones of interest. Like the squares on a chequerboard, he says, which perhaps one day I'll fill in. Marking out the spaces, setting the places. A place for animals. Also for bureaucracy, for flowers and for food. I see it like a table: seating you next to you and you next to you, anticipating the conversations between topics, the arguments. The invitation to his audience was to collaborate actively in the inquiry. To fill in the suggested squares themselves, or to propose new ones. And they did: they spoke with Barthes between the sessions, or left notes, and wrote letters, asking questions, making corrections, providing alternative references, redirecting the path of the research toward their own different concerns; which might be one way of describing to myself what I think I am doing here.

Now I love
this idea