

Reporting: Writings from The New Yorker

David Remnick

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David Remnick is a writer with a rare gift for making readers understand the hearts and minds of our public figures. Whether it's the decline and fall of Mike Tyson, Al Gore's struggle to move forward after his loss in the 2000 election, or Vladimir Putin dealing with Gorbachev's legacy, Remnick brings his subjects to life with extraordinary clarity and depth.

In *Reporting*, he gives us his best writing from the past fifteen years, ranging from American politics and culture to post-Soviet Russia to the Middle East conflict; from Tony Blair grappling with Iraq, to Philip Roth making sense of America's past, to the rise of Hamas in Palestine. Both intimate and deeply informed by history, *Reporting* is an exciting and panoramic portrait of our times.

Reporting: Writings from The New Yorker Details

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Lorenzo Berardi says

Have you ever dreamed to see Mike Tyson and Tony Blair fighting for the title of Heavyweight Champion of the World with Don King on the right corner of the ring and Gordon Brown on the left one?

Well, there you are guys.
Make your bet, please.

The match takes place in Moscow's Red Square.

Vladimir Putin wearing a bikini and a miniskirt is holding the signs of the rounds in the intervals.
Boris Yeltsin is standing on the rooftop of Saint Basil's Cathedral advertising Pizza Hut's special offers with a megaphone.

Don De Lillo is passing by with a tray selling nuts and sodas.
Al Gore is just behind him, picking up the nutshells and empty cans for recycling them.

Meanwhile, Benjamin Netanyahu and Vaclav Havel are playing "Risk" sitting cross-legged on a smaller ring below the GUM's roof. A Tass dispatch says that Havel just conquered Kamchatka. Mick Jagger paints it black.

Philip Roth is masturbating himself close to the Lenin's Mausoleum dreaming to marry a young communist.

In a not very distant dacha, this is just another day in the life of Aleksandr Isaevich Solzhenitsyn.

David Remnick reports. He made it all.
And these writings of him are better than a Barnum show.

m_miriam says

What I learned from this book:

1. The definition of 63 words, including "rodomontade" and "omphalos"
2. Insights into contemporary cultural dynamics of Palestine and Israel
3. A modern history of the sport of boxing and its practitioners

Mk100 says

Every Remnick article included in the book is a gem. The Solzhenitsyn is particularly terrific. A great quote:
"In a tyranny, a real writer is like a second government."

Brenda says

This guy might be the smartest, hippest guy alive. Imagine, being the editor of New Yorker and in the position of picking the most interesting writing from the most popular literary magazine in the country. Saw him on Charlie Rose talking about The Bridge, his book about Obama before the presidency. So smart, so neutral...classic old time journalism.

Ángel says

A través de esta recopilación de entrevistas Remnick deja claro porqué es uno de los máximos exponentes del periodismo estadounidense. El manejo de tópicos, el nivel de investigación y la seriedad con que enfrenta su trabajo deberían ser un ejemplo y una guía para los periodistas mexicanos.

Joeji says

Amazing collection of profiles including Benjamin Netanyahu, Mike Tyson, Tony Blair, and more. The book has five sections: one on Washington politics (included a horrifying article on Katrina), one on authors (Philip Roth included), one with Russian politics, language(learn why Vladimir Putin tries to be boring), Israeli section, including Palestinian and Israeli profiles, and the last on sports figures.

Juli says

3.5 stars. Top-notch writing by Remnick, but some/much of the content is obviously dated, 10 years after publication. Some of the most interesting essays were on subjects I did not expect to find interesting, so I want to get my hands on other Remnick collections and maybe have another go at his book on Obama, which I listed to some years ago.

David McGrogan says

I enjoyed this book tremendously, although I found the central section on Israel/Palestine a bit wearing and Remnick's writing style somewhat relentless after 500+ pages. The highlights are the chapters on Gore, Blair, and the boxing ones; the most interesting in retrospect is the portrayal of Putin as a rather faceless steady-pair-of-hands - how different things looked in 2006!

Carolina says

Tom Wolfe escreveu em 1973 que “a literatura mais importante escrita hoje na América é a de não-ficção”.

Ele se referia ao movimento que surgiu com autores como Truman Capote, Gay Talese e Jimmy Breslin, e ao qual foi dado – não se sabe por quem, ou ao menos Wolfe não sabe – o nome de Novo Jornalismo.

Diferente das matérias tradicionais dos jornais, os textos do Novo Jornalismo atingiram a longevidade e são lidos até hoje. Entre eles *A Sangue Frio* e *Hiroshima*, publicados na revista *The New Yorker*. Mas não só naqueles tempos surgiram grandes obras. As gerações mais recentes da revista nova-iorquina puderam ver a publicação original de várias das reportagens reunidas no livro *Dentro da Floresta*, uma coletânea de matérias escritas pelo atual editor-chefe da *New Yorker*, David Remnick, entre 1994 e 2006. É o bom jornalismo, influenciado por grandes nomes, que sai das bancas e chega às livrarias; mesmo que o fato relatado tenha acontecido há 15 anos.

A atemporalidade se reflete na organização do livro, que não segue uma ordem cronológica. As reportagens são separadas em cinco temas: poder (que inclui políticos, uma editora temida e o furacão Katrina), literatura, Rússia, Israel e Palestina, e boxe. Não é à toa que o título original do livro seja *Reporting*; David Remnick mostra sua aptidão de repórter em cada texto, na percepção de detalhes, conexão de fatos e descrição de cenas.

O livro começa com os perfis de Al Gore e Katherine Graham. O primeiro é bem-humorado e retrata o “ex-futuro-presidente” dos Estados Unidos como um sujeito desajeitado e ao mesmo tempo um homem que tenta manter a dignidade frente ao país que quase o elegeu. Ao contar a história de Graham, editora do *Washington Post*, no posto durante o caso de Watergate, o tom é outro. O relato é sensível, mostrando as fragilidades de uma mulher tão respeitada. Em ambos os casos, Remnick traz o lado mais humano dos perfilados, aproximando-as do leitor.

O mesmo se dá com os escritores. Os perfis falam do ofício de escrever; não tratam a literatura como um talento criativo inato, mas como uma profissão e um esforço diário. Parece bastante conveniente que os escritores retratados e citados por David Remnick estejam quase todos nos catálogos da Companhia das Letras: Philip Roth, Don DeLillo, Vladimir Nabokov, Amós Oz. As reportagens instigam a procura desses autores. É ainda mais interessante ler *Fantasma* sai de cena, o último lançamento de Roth no Brasil, conhecendo o cotidiano solitário de sua casa em Connecticut.

Nessas histórias, a *New Yorker* também é uma personagem. Seja como meio de publicação para esses autores ou como uma cópia contrabandeada da qual a jovem russa Larissa Volokhonsky traduziu um poema para o russo. Larissa e seu marido, Richard Pevear, são o centro de uma reportagem sem atualidade ou “importância jornalística” alguma. Porém um texto brilhante e interessante sobre as traduções de obras da literatura russa. Não há lide; Remnick introduz a matéria contando uma história – como ele faz muito bem, sejam experiências próprias e até histórias que ninguém lhe contou. Através de cartas e publicações, ele relata o início e o fim da amizade entre os escritores Vladimir Nabokov e Edmund Wilson, que romperam relações por causa de uma tradução.

Mesmo para narrar um fato inegavelmente jornalístico – a luta de Tyson contra Holyfield, que acabou com uma mordida na orelha do segundo – Remnick não apenas traça um perfil brutal do lutador, mas esboça uma pequena história do boxe americano. Com apenas uma breve e discreta referência no início, ele só fala da luta no final. É a subversão do modelo predominante de jornalismo em sua melhor forma.

Ryan Williams says

Shining collection of journalism from the legendary New Yorker editor and Pulitzer-Prize winner.

Highlights include *The Exile: Solzhenitsyn in Vermont*, and my favourite piece, *Kid Dynamite Blows Up*. The latter (and all the boxing pieces) successfully mine the same seam opened in his earlier book on Muhammad Ali, *King of the World*, with the same knack of traveling from the boxer's nervous system to the outer edges of an entire culture.

Terry Clague says

"Freedom! To fill people's mailboxes, eyes, ears and brains with commercial rubbish against their will, television programs that are impossible to watch with a sense of coherence. Freedom! To force information on people, taking no account of their right not to accept it or their right of peace of mind. Freedom! To spit in the eyes and souls of passersby with advertisements."

(Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn - quoted in Remnick, D. *Reporting*, 2006)

Iván says

Un extraordinario libro para entender doce figuras claves de nuestro tiempo. Cada capítulo es una de esas personalidades, leemos sobre políticos como Al Gore, Blair, Havel, Putin, Netanyahu, Arafat, escritores como Roth, DeLillo, Solzhenitsin u Oz, un músico como Springsteen o la antigua directora del Washington post Graham. Un libro realmente fantástico.

Freek DS says

Great stuff to make sense of the world. Especially pieces 'Mrs Graham', on Philip Roth and the 'Translation Wars' took my interes. But everything on Russia, Israël, and even boxing were compelling enough to keep on reading. even if it clearly carries the 'sympoms' of its time - eg sentences like "it is expected that X will win the elections..."

Andy Nguyen says

Remnick's book offers a lot of details on the people he profiled, none of which insightful or original. His book can be passed off as a wikipedia-like reference of famous people, if not for his tendency to make endless references to pop culture, interviews, and descriptions of mundane and stereotypical behaviors or events. In short, "Reporting" offers nothing more than a much shorter profile readily available would do.

Roz Milner says

A collection of current New Yorker editor David Remnick's essays, *Reporting* is a nice collection but it's also kind of a mixed bag. I suppose this happens with any collection of journalism: these were written more or less on deadline around ten years (or longer) ago. So we already know what happened next. This is what made some of these essays really come off as dated: like the one about how Ariel Sharon or the one about how Vladimir Putin. Whee he tries to imagine what the future held for these people, well, we have the benefit of hindsight. But try to not let that get in your way, since these are well-written and well-researched pieces of journalism.

The book's split more or less into sections, with the pieces ranging from profile stories to short Talk of the Town pieces to longer enterprise/think-piece stories. There's a section filled with literary profiles on Don DeLillo, Solzhenitsyn and Philip Roth. Others include Russia and the middle east. The last section (my favorite, actually) is on boxing, or more specifically, on Mike Tyson. When Remnick's writing is at it's best, he's been set loose somewhere big, either right before some action (like before the Tyson/Evander Holyfield fight) or right after, like in his piece about New Orleans post-Katrina.

On the whole, it's a good collection of non-fiction and although I wouldn't rank it among the best collection of New Yorker material I've read (that honor still goes to *Just Enough Liebling: Classic Work by the Legendary New Yorker Writer*), it's still worth a read if you're a fan of the magazine or of Remnick's other books.
