The artist as a projector of light

The conception of artists and their works as projectors of light produces one of the richest constellations of metaphors in the novel. We remember that Elstir’s head was said to be a projector of his vision of the world onto his paintings just as Vinteuil’s music is the mode by which he “heard” the universe and projected it far beyond himself in the Albertine at the pianola passage. —The Captive 5: 505

Love

Here is an interesting observation about unrequited love:

. . . for the countless kindnesses of love may end by arousing, in the person who inspires without feeling it, an affection and a gratitude less selfish than the sentiment that provoked them, which, perhaps, after years of separation, when nothing of that sentiment remains in the former lover, will still persist in the beloved. —The Captive 5: 470

Memory, as a pharmacy or photographic darkroom

We find a little of everything in our memory; it is a sort of pharmacy, a sort of chemical laboratory, in which our groping hand may come to rest now on a sedative drug, now on a dangerous poison. —The Captive 5: 526

The unknowable other

The unknown element in the lives of other people is like that of nature, which each fresh scientific discovery merely reduces but does not abolish. A jealous lover exasperates the woman he loves by depriving her of a thousand unimportant pleasures, but those pleasures which are the keystone of her life she conceals in a place where, even at moments when he think that he is showing the most intelligent perspicacity and third parties are keeping him closely informed, he never dreams of looking. —The Captive 5: 527-28