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Quotes by Baudelaire, Charles

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Charles Pierre Baudelaire (April 9, 1821 – August 31, 1867) was one of the most influential French poets of the nineteenth Century. He was also an important critic, and translator.

Evil is done without effort, naturally, it is the working of fate; good is always the product of an art.

- Baudelaire, Charles

I consider it useless and tedious to represent what exists, because nothing that exists satisfies me. Nature is ugly, and I prefer the monsters of my fancy to what is positively trivial.

- Baudelaire, Charles

All fashions are charming, or rather relatively charming, each one being a new striving, more or less well conceived, after beauty, an approximate statement of an ideal, the desire for which constantly teases the unsatisfied human mind.

- Baudelaire, Charles

I have to confess that I had gambled on my soul and lost it with heroic insouciance and lightness of touch. The soul is so impalpable, so often useless, and sometimes such a nuisance, that I felt no more emotion on losing it than if, on a stroll, I had mislaid my

visiting card.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Genius is no more than childhood recaptured at will, childhood equipped now with man's physical means to express itself, and with the analytical mind that enables it to bring order into the sum of experience, involuntarily amassed.

- Baudelaire, Charles

As a remedy against all ills; poverty, sickness, and melancholy only one thing is absolutely necessary; a liking for work.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Every idea is endowed of itself with immortal life, like a human being. All created form, even that which is created by man, is immortal. For form is independent of matter: molecules do not constitute form.

- Baudelaire, Charles

There is no more steely barb than that of the Infinite.

- Baudelaire, Charles

A frenzied passion for art is a canker that devours everything else.

- Baudelaire, Charles

The more a man cultivates the arts the less he fornicates. A more and more apparent cleavage occurs between the spirit and the brute.

- Baudelaire, Charles

It is unfortunately very true that, without leisure and money, love can be no more than an orgy of the common man. Instead of being a sudden impulse full of ardor and reverie, it becomes a distastefully utilitarian affair.

- Baudelaire, Charles

The lover of life makes the whole world into his family, just as the lover of the fair sex creates his from all the lovely women he has found, from those that could be found, and those who are impossible to find.

- Baudelaire, Charles

I have cultivated my hysteria with delight and terror. Now I suffer continually from vertigo, and today, 23rd of January, 1862, I have received a singular warning, I have felt the wind of the wing of madness pass over me.

- Baudelaire, Charles

The son will run away from the family not at eighteen but at twelve, emancipated by his gluttonous precocity; he will fly not to seek heroic adventures, not to deliver a beautiful prisoner from a tower, not to immortalize a garret with sublime thoughts, but to found a business, to enrich himself and to compete with his infamous papa.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Modernity is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent; it is one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immovable.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Nature... is nothing but the inner voice of self-interest.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Nearly all our originality comes from the stamp that time impresses upon our sensibility.

- Baudelaire, Charles

If photography is allowed to stand in for art in some of its functions it will soon supplant or corrupt it completely thanks to the natural support it will find in the stupidity of the multitude. It must return to its real task, which is to be the servant of the sciences and the arts, but the very humble servant, like printing and shorthand which have neither created nor supplanted literature.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Who among us has not, in moments of ambition, dreamt of the miracle of a form of poetic prose, musical but without rhythm and rhyme, both supple and staccato enough to adapt itself to the lyrical movements of our souls, the undulating movements of our reveries, and the convulsive movements of our consciences? This obsessive ideal springs above all from frequent contact with enormous cities, from the junction of their innumerable connections.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Poetry and progress are like two ambitious men who hate one another with an instinctive hatred, and when they meet upon the same road, one of them has to give place.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Any healthy man can go without food for two days -- but not without poetry.

- Baudelaire, Charles

The man who says his evening prayer is a captain posting his sentinels. He can sleep.

- Baudelaire, Charles

The pleasure we derive from the representation of the present is due, not only to the beauty it can be clothed in, but also to its essential quality of being the present.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Everything that is beautiful and noble is the product of reason and calculation.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Any man who does not accept the conditions of human life sells his soul.

- Baudelaire, Charles

We all have the republican spirit in our veins, like syphilis in our bones. We are

democratized and veneralized.

- Baudelaire, Charles

To say the word Romanticism is to say modern art -- that is, intimacy, spirituality, color, aspiration towards the infinite, expressed by every means available to the arts.

- Baudelaire, Charles

True Civilization does not lie in gas, nor in steam, nor in turn-tables. It lies in the reduction of the traces of original sin.

- Baudelaire, Charles

All forms of beauty, like all possible phenomena, contain an element of the eternal and an element of the transitory -- of the absolute and of the particular. Absolute and eternal beauty does not exist, or rather it is only an abstraction creamed from the general surface of different beauties. The particular element in each manifestation comes from the emotions: and just as we have our own particular emotions, so we have our own beauty.

- Baudelaire, Charles

There are as many kinds of beauty as there are habitual ways of seeking happiness.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Hypocrite reader -- my fellow -- my brother!

- Baudelaire, Charles

Everything considered, work is less boring than amusing oneself.

- Baudelaire, Charles

For the merchant, even honesty is a financial speculation.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Our religion is itself profoundly sad -- a religion of universal anguish, and one which, because of its very catholicity, grants full liberty to the individual and asks no better than to be celebrated in each man's own language -- so long as he knows anguish and is a painter.

- Baudelaire, Charles

The whole visible universe is but a storehouse of images and signs to which the imagination will give a relative place and value; it is a sort of pasture which the imagination must digest and transform.

- Baudelaire, Charles

What is exhilarating in bad taste is the aristocratic pleasure of giving offense.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Nothing can be done except little by little.

- Baudelaire, Charles

We are weighed down, every moment, by the conception and the sensation of Time. And there are but two means of escaping and forgetting this nightmare: pleasure and work.

Pleasure consumes us. Work strengthens us. Let us choose.

- Baudelaire, Charles

For the perfect idler, for the passionate observer it becomes an immense source of enjoyment to establish his dwelling in the throng, in the ebb and flow, the bustle, the fleeting and the infinite. To be away from home and yet to feel at home anywhere; to see the world, to be at the very center of the world, and yet to be unseen of the world, such are some of the minor pleasures of those independent, intense and impartial spirits, who do not lend themselves easily to linguistic definitions. The observer is a prince enjoying his incognito wherever he goes.

- Baudelaire, Charles

The world only goes round by misunderstanding.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Alas, human vices, however horrible one might imagine them to be, contain the proof (were it only in their infinite expansion) of man's longing for the infinite; but it is a longing that often takes the wrong route. It is my belief that the reason behind all culpable excesses lies in this depravation of the sense of the infinite.

- Baudelaire, Charles

There are in every man, always, two simultaneous allegiances, one to God, the other to Satan. Invocation of God, or Spirituality, is a desire to climb higher; that of Satan, or animality, is delight in descent.

- Baudelaire, Charles

The cannon thunders... limbs fly in all directions... one can hear the groans of victims and the howling of those performing the sacrifice... it's Humanity in search of happiness.

- Baudelaire, Charles

A sweetheart is a bottle of wine, a wife is a wine bottle.

- Baudelaire, Charles

The being who, for most men, is the source of the most lively, and even, be it said, to the shame of philosophical delights, the most lasting joys; the being towards or for whom all their efforts tend for whom and by whom fortunes are made and lost; for whom, but especially by whom, artists and poets compose their most delicate jewels; from whom flow the most enervating pleasures and the most enriching sufferings -- woman, in a word, is not, for the artist in general... only the female of the human species. She is rather a divinity, a star.

- Baudelaire, Charles

Inspiration comes of working every day.

- Baudelaire, Charles

On the day when a young writer corrects his first proof-sheet he is as proud as a schoolboy who has just got his first dose of pox.

- Baudelaire, Charles

The greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world he doesn't exist

- Baudelaire, Charles

The life of our city is rich in poetic and marvelous subjects. We are enveloped and steeped as though in an atmosphere of the marvelous; but we do not notice it.

- Baudelaire, Charles

There exist certain individuals who are, by nature, given purely to contemplation and are utterly unsuited to action, and who, nevertheless, under a mysterious and unknown impulse, sometimes act with a speed which they themselves would have thought beyond them.

- Baudelaire, Charles

To be just, that is to say, to justify its existence, criticism should be partial, passionate and political, that is to say, written from an exclusive point of view, but a point of view that opens up the widest horizons.

- Baudelaire, Charles

It is from the womb of art that criticism was born.

- Baudelaire, Charles



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