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Quotes by Orwell, George

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Eric Arthur Blair (June 25, 1903January 21, 1950), better known by the pen name George Orwell, was a British author and journalist. Noted as a political and cultural commentator, as well as an accomplished novelist, Orwell is among the most widely-admired English-language essayists of the 20th century. He is best known for two novels written towards the end of his life: *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

For the ordinary man is passive. Within a narrow circle (home life, and perhaps the trade unions or local politics) he feels himself master of his fate, but against major events he is as helpless as against the elements. So far from endeavoring to influence the future, he simply lies down and lets things happen to him.

- Orwell, George

To walk through the ruined cities of Germany is to feel an actual doubt about the continuity of civilization.

- Orwell, George

One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes a revolution in order to establish a dictatorship.

- Orwell, George

No advance in wealth, no softening of manners, no reform or revolution has ever brought human equality a millimeter nearer.

- Orwell, George

All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.

- Orwell, George

We may find in the long run that tinned food is a deadlier weapon than the machine-gun.

- Orwell, George

Freedom is the freedom to say that two plus two make four. If that is granted, all else follows.

- Orwell, George

I sometimes think that the price of liberty is not so much eternal vigilance as eternal dirt.

- Orwell, George

To a surprising extent the war-lords in shining armor, the apostles of the martial virtues, tend not to die fighting when the time comes. History is full of ignominious getaways by the great and famous.

- Orwell, George

Whoever is winning at the moment will always seem to be invincible.

- Orwell, George

On the whole, human beings want to be good, but not too good, and not quite all the time.

- Orwell, George

Men can only be happy when they do not assume that the object of life is happiness

- Orwell, George

The intellectual is different from the ordinary man, but only in certain sections of his personality, and even then not all the time.

- Orwell, George

A dirty joke is a sort of mental rebellion.

- Orwell, George

To write or even speak English is not a science but an art. There are no reliable words. Whoever writes English is involved in a struggle that never lets up even for a sentence. He is struggling against vagueness, against obscurity, against the lure of the decorative adjective, against the encroachment of Latin and Greek, and, above all, against the worn-out phrases and dead metaphors with which the language is cluttered up.

- Orwell, George

The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real

and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish squirting out ink.

- Orwell, George

Language ought to be the joint creation of poets and manual workers.

- Orwell, George

The high sentiments always win in the end, the leaders who offer blood, toil, tears, and sweat always get more out of their followers than those who offer safety and a good time.

When it comes to the pinch, human beings are heroic.

- Orwell, George

A liberal is a power worshipper without the power.

- Orwell, George

Four legs good, two legs bad.

- Orwell, George

The atmosphere of orthodoxy is always damaging to prose, and above all it is completely ruinous to the novel, the most anarchical of all forms of literature.

- Orwell, George

The existence of good bad literature --the fact that one can be amused or excited or even

moved by a book that one's intellect simply refuses to take seriously --is a reminder that art is not the same thing as cerebration.

- Orwell, George

To an ordinary human being, love means nothing if it does not mean loving some people more than others.

- Orwell, George

What can you do against the lunatic who is more intelligent than yourself, who gives your arguments a fair hearing and then simply persists in his lunacy?

- Orwell, George

We of the sinking middle class may sink without further struggles into the working class where we belong, and probably when we get there it will not be so dreadful as we feared, for, after all, we have nothing to lose.

- Orwell, George

The atom bombs are piling up in the factories, the police are prowling through the cities, the lies are streaming from the loudspeakers, but the earth is still going round the sun.

- Orwell, George

Myths which are believed in tend to become true.

- Orwell, George

Nationalism is power hunger tempered by self-deception.

- Orwell, George

Early in life I had noticed that no event is ever correctly reported in a newspaper.

- Orwell, George

If you want a vision of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face -- forever.

- Orwell, George

Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.

- Orwell, George

The essence of being human is that one does not seek perfection, that one is sometimes willing to commit sins for the sake of loyalty, that one does not push asceticism to the point where it makes friendly intercourse impossible, and that one is prepared in the end to be defeated and broken up by life, which is the inevitable price of fastening one's love upon other human individuals.

- Orwell, George

The main motive for nonattachment is a desire to escape from the pain of living, and above all from love, which, sexual or non-sexual, is hard work.

- Orwell, George

He was an embittered atheist (the sort of atheist who does not so much disbelieve in God as personally dislike Him).

- Orwell, George

Autobiography is only to be trusted when it reveals something disgraceful. A man who gives a good account of himself is probably lying, since any life when viewed from the inside is simply a series of defeats.

- Orwell, George

Political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible.

- Orwell, George

Power-worship blurs political judgment because it leads, almost unavoidably, to the belief that present trends will continue. Whoever is winning at the moment will always seem to be invincible.

- Orwell, George

Power is not a means, it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship.

- Orwell, George

Progress is not an illusion, it happens, but it is slow and invariably disappointing.

- Orwell, George

So much of left-wing thought is a kind of playing with fire by people who don't even know that fire is hot.

- Orwell, George

Enlightened people seldom or never possess a sense of responsibility.

- Orwell, George

Most revolutionaries are potential Tories, because they imagine that everything can be put right by altering the shape of society; once that change is effected, as it sometimes is, they see no need for any other.

- Orwell, George

Saints should always be judged guilty until they are proved innocent.

- Orwell, George

Probably the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton, but the opening battles of all subsequent wars have been lost there.

- Orwell, George

No one can look back on his schooldays and say with truth that they were altogether unhappy.

- Orwell, George

One of the effects of a safe and civilized life is an immense oversensitiveness which makes all the primary emotions somewhat disgusting. Generosity is as painful as meanness, gratitude as hateful as ingratitude.

- Orwell, George

But the thing that I saw in your face no power can disinherit: No bomb that ever burst shatters the crystal spirit.

- Orwell, George

Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, jealousy, boastfulness, disregard of all rules and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence: in other words it is war minus the shooting.

- Orwell, George

Progress and reaction have both turned out to be swindles. Seemingly, there is nothing left but quietism -- robbing reality of its terrors by simply submitting to it.

- Orwell, George

Most people get a fair amount of fun out of their lives, but on balance life is suffering, and only the very young or the very foolish imagine otherwise.

- Orwell, George

The books one reads in childhood, and perhaps most of all the bad and good bad books, create in one's mind a sort of false map of the world, a series of fabulous countries into which one can retreat at odd moments throughout the rest of life, and which in some cases can survive a visit to the real countries which they are supposed to represent.

- Orwell, George

Not to expose your true feelings to an adult seems to be instinctive from the age of seven or eight onwards.

- Orwell, George

One cannot really be a Catholic and grown up.

- Orwell, George

To survive it is often necessary to fight and to fight you have to dirty yourself.

- Orwell, George

Men are only as good as their technical development allows them to be.

- Orwell, George

A tragic situation exists precisely when virtue does not triumph but when it is still felt that man is nobler than the forces which destroy him.

- Orwell, George

To say I accept in an age like our own is to say that you accept concentration-camps, rubber truncheons, Hitler, Stalin, bombs, aeroplanes, tinned food, machine guns, putsches, purges, slogans, Bedaux belts, gas-masks, submarines, spies, provocateurs, press-censorship, secret prisons, aspirins, Hollywood films and political murder.

- Orwell, George

The quickest way of ending a war is to lose it.

- Orwell, George

There is hardly such a thing as a war in which it makes no difference who wins. Nearly always one side stands more or less for progress, the other side more or less for reaction.

- Orwell, George

In every one of those little stucco boxes there's some poor bastard who's never free except when he's fast asleep and dreaming that he's got the boss down the bottom of a well and is binging lumps of coal at him.

- Orwell, George

Good novels are not written by orthodoxy-sniffers, nor by people who are conscience-stricken about their own orthodoxy. Good novels are written by people who are not frightened.

- Orwell, George

All writers are vain, selfish and lazy, and at the very bottom of their motives lies a mystery. Writing a book is a long, exhausting struggle, like a long bout of some painful illness. One would never undertake such a thing if one were not driven by some demon whom one can neither resist nor understand.

- Orwell, George

For a creative writer possession of the truth is less important than emotional sincerity.

- Orwell, George

He is a man of thirty-five, but looks fifty. He is bald, has varicose veins and wears spectacles, or would wear them if his only pair were not chronically lost. If things are normal with him, he will be suffering from malnutrition, but if he has recently had a lucky streak, he will be suffering from a hangover. At present it is half past eleven in the morning, and according to his schedule he should have started work two hours ago; but even if he had made any serious effort to start he would have been frustrated by the almost continuous ringing of the telephone bell, the yells of the baby, the rattle of an electric drill out in the street, and the heavy boots of his creditors clumping up the stairs. The most recent interruption was the arrival of the second post, which brought him two circulars and an income tax demand printed in red. Needless to say this person is a writer.

- Orwell, George

The child thinks of growing old as an almost obscene calamity, which for some mysterious reason will never happen to itself. All who have passed the age of thirty are joyless

grotesques, endlessly fussing about things of no importance and staying alive without, so far as the child can see, having anything to live for. Only child life is real life.

- Orwell, George

Part of the reason for the ugliness of adults, in a child's eyes, is that the child is usually looking upwards, and few faces are at their best when seen from below.

- Orwell, George

One can love a child, perhaps, more deeply than one can love another adult, but it is rash to assume that the child feels any love in return.

- Orwell, George

To accept civilization as it is practically means accepting decay.

- Orwell, George

Throughout recorded time... there have been three kinds of people in the world, the High, the Middle, and the Low. They have been subdivided in many ways, they have borne countless different names, and their relative numbers, as well as their attitude towards one another, have varied from age to age: but the essential structure of society has never altered. Even after enormous upheavals and seemingly irrevocable changes, the same pattern has always reasserted itself, just as a gyroscope will always return to equilibrium, however far it is pushed one way or the other. The aims of these three groups are entirely irreconcilable.

- Orwell, George

To see what is in front of one's nose requires a constant struggle.

- Orwell, George

The Communism of the English intellectual is something explicable enough. It is the patriotism of the deracinated.

- Orwell, George

Doublethink means the power of holding two contradictory beliefs in one's mind simultaneously, and accepting both of them.

- Orwell, George

If you have embraced a creed which appears to be free from the ordinary dirtiness of politics --a creed from which you yourself cannot expect to draw any material advantage --surely that proves that you are in the right?

- Orwell, George

Prolonged, indiscriminate reviewing of books is a quite exceptionally thankless, irritating and exhausting job. It not only involves praising trash but constantly inventing reactions towards books about which one has no spontaneous feeling whatever.

- Orwell, George

All animals are equal But some animals are more equal than others

- Orwell, George

WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH.

- Orwell, George

People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf.

- Orwell, George

Een scrupuleuze schrijver zal bij iedere zin die hij schrijft, zich minstens vier vragen stellen: 1. Wat probeer ik te zeggen? 2. Welke woorden zullen dit uitdrukken? 3. Welk beeld of idioom zal dit duidelijker maken? 4. Is dit beeld fris genoeg om een effect te hebben?

- Orwell, George

In sommige schrijfvormen, vooral in kunstkritiek en literaire kritiek, is het normaal om op lange passages te botsen die bijna niets van betekenis hebben.

- Orwell, George

De grote vijand van klare taal is oneerlijkheid. Wanneer er een kloof is tussen je echte bedoelingen en deze die je verkondigt, dan maak je als het ware instinctief gebruik van lange woorden en uitgeputte idomen, zoals een inktvis die inkt uitspuwt.

- Orwell, George



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