

Anthony Burgess

Quotes

*Writing, Men, Art, Book, Brother, Orange, Thinking, Real, Life, World, Sex,
Choices, Evil, Fiction, Literature, Doe, Life Is, Children, Boys, Wine*

Laugh and the world laughs with you, snore and you sleep alone.

~Anthony Burgess

We all need money, but there are degrees of desperation.

~Anthony Burgess

The important thing is moral choice. Evil has to exist along with good, in order that moral choice may operate. Life is sustained by the grinding opposition of moral entities.

~Anthony Burgess

It's always good to remember where you come from and celebrate it. To remember where you come from is part of where you're going.

~Anthony Burgess

...We're a government that believes in everybody having the illusion of free will.

~Anthony Burgess

To be left alone is the most precious thing one can ask of the modern world.

~Anthony Burgess

I conclude that there is as much sense in nonsense as there is nonsense in sense.

~Anthony Burgess

Is it better for a man to have chosen evil than to have good imposed upon him?

~Anthony Burgess

Does God want goodness or the choice of goodness? Is a man who chooses to be bad perhaps in some way better than a man who has the good imposed upon him?

~Anthony Burgess

Sanity is a handicap and liability if you're living in a mad world.

~Anthony Burgess

There is, in fact, not much point in writing a novel unless you can show the possibility of moral transformation, or an increase in wisdom, operating in your chief character or characters.

~Anthony Burgess

The downtrodden are the great creators of slang.

~Anthony Burgess

When a man cannot chose, he ceases to be a man.

~Anthony Burgess

Literature ceases to be literature when it commits itself to moral uplift; it becomes moral philosophy or some such dull thing.

~Anthony Burgess

Beckett does not believe in God, though he seems to imply that God has committed an unforgivable sin by not existing.

~Anthony Burgess

He said it was artificial respiration, but now I find I am to have his child.

~Anthony Burgess

It's funny how the colors of the real world only seem really real when you watch them on a screen.

~Anthony Burgess

Life is a wretched gray Saturday, but it has to be lived through.

~Anthony Burgess

The unconscious mind has a habit of asserting itself in the afternoon.

~Anthony Burgess

We can destroy what we have written, but we cannot unwrite it.

~Anthony Burgess

It is as inhuman to be totally good as it is to be totally evil.

~Anthony Burgess

When the State withers, humanity flowers.

~Anthony Burgess

I chart a little first-list of names, rough synopsis of chapters, and so on. But one daren't overplan; so many things are generated by the sheer act of writing.

~Anthony Burgess

It was like a bird of rarest-spun heaven metal or like silvery wine flowing in a spaceship, gravity all nonsense now.

~Anthony Burgess

Each man kills the thing he loves.

~Anthony Burgess

Language exists less to record the actual than to liberate the imagination.

~Anthony Burgess

Art is rare and sacred and hard work, and there ought to be a wall of fire around it.

~Anthony Burgess

Translation is not a matter of words only: it is a matter of making intelligible a whole culture.

~Anthony Burgess

The state is never so efficient as when it wants money.

~Anthony Burgess

If you believe in an unseen Christ, you will believe in the unseen Christlike potential of others.

~Anthony Burgess

Every dogma has its day.

~Anthony Burgess

The purpose of education is to fit us for life in a civilised community, and it seems to follow from the subjects we study that the two most important things in civilised life are Art and Science.

~Anthony Burgess

laws and conditions appropriate to a mechanical creation, against this I raise my sword-pen.

~Anthony Burgess

Hitler was a teetotalitarian.

~Anthony Burgess

Fumbling for a word is everybody's birthright.

~Anthony Burgess

Colonialism. The enforced spread of the rule of reason. But who is going to spread it among the colonizers?

~Anthony Burgess

Literature is all, or mostly, about sex.

~Anthony Burgess

Come with uncle and hear all proper. Hear angel trumpets and devil trombones...you are invited!

~Anthony Burgess

Senseless violence is a prerogative of youth, which has much energy but little talent for the constructive.

~Anthony Burgess

I didn't think; I experimented.

~Anthony Burgess

Only in England is the perversion of language regarded as a victory for democracy.

~Anthony Burgess

Welly, welly, welly, welly, welly, welly, well. To what do I owe the extreme pleasure of this surprising visit?

~Anthony Burgess

The not-self cannot have the bad, meaning they of the government and the judges and the schools cannot allow the bad because they cannot allow the self.

~Anthony Burgess

In two thousand years all our generals and politicians may be forgotten, but Einstein and Madame Curie and Bernard Shaw and Stravinsky will keep the memory of our age alive.

~Anthony Burgess

For the serious artist does not satisfy needs

~Anthony Burgess

There was me, that is Alex, and my three droogs, that is Pete, Georgie and Dim, Dim being really dim, and we sat in the Korova Milkbar

making up our rassoodocks what to do with the evening.

~Anthony Burgess

It had been a wonderful evening and what I needed now, to give it the perfect ending, was a little of the Ludwig Van.

~Anthony Burgess

I think art is sublimated libido. You can't be a eunuch priest, and you can't be a eunuch artist.

~Anthony Burgess

Rome's just a city like anywhere else. A vastly overrated city, I'd say. It trades on belief just as Stratford trades on Shakespeare.

~Anthony Burgess

The writer's life seethes within but not without.

~Anthony Burgess

I viddied that thinking is for the gloopy ones and that the oomny ones use like inspiration and what Bog sends. For now it was lovely music that came to my aid.

~Anthony Burgess

Americans will listen, but they do not care to read. War and Peace must wait for the leisure of retirement, which never really comes: meanwhile it helps to furnish the living room.

~Anthony Burgess

Violence among young people is an aspect of their desire to create. They don't know how to use their energy creatively so they do the opposite and destroy.

~Anthony Burgess

If you expect the worst from a person you can never be disappointed.

~Anthony Burgess

But what I do I do because I like to do.

~Anthony Burgess

There is a satisfactory boniness about grammar which the flesh of sheer vocabulary requires before it can become a vertebrate and walk the earth.

~Anthony Burgess

Life is, of course, terrible.

~Anthony Burgess

Bath twice a day to be really clean, once a day to be passably clean, once a week to avoid being a public menace.

~Anthony Burgess

Life is sustained by the grinding opposition of moral entities.

~Anthony Burgess

Women thrive on novelty and are easy meat for the commerce of fashion. Men prefer old pipes and torn jackets.

~Anthony Burgess

The practice of fiction can be dangerous: it puts ideas into the head of the world.

~Anthony Burgess

All novels are experimental.

~Anthony Burgess

I see what is right and approve, but I do what is wrong.

~Anthony Burgess

Every grain of experience is food for the greedy growing soul of the artist.

~Anthony Burgess

Keep away from physicians. It is all probing and guessing and pretending with them. They leave it to Nature to cure in her own time, but they take the credit. As well as very fat fees.

~Anthony Burgess

For no man is damned precisely because God hath not chosen him, because he is not elected, but because he is a sinner, and doth wilfully refuse the means of grace offered.

~Anthony Burgess

All human life is here, but the Holy Ghost seems to be somewhere else.

~Anthony Burgess

Delimitation is always difficult. The world is one, life is one. The sweetest and most heavenly of activities partake in some measure of violence - the act of love, for instance; music, for instance.

~Anthony Burgess

Ignorance and poverty are the best condiments for the great feast of the world, but the inexperienced and poor are never invited to it.

~Anthony Burgess

...the essential intention is the real sin. A man who cannot choose ceases to be a man.

~Anthony Burgess

What critics often ask for is the impossible, though this may be a salutary means of extending the borders of art.

~Anthony Burgess

With both agents and publishers hungry for bestsellers, literature will have to end up as a cottage industry.

~Anthony Burgess

Evil has to exist along with good, in order that moral choice may operate.

~Anthony Burgess

Put it off for a bit. All life is putting off. Well, not entirely.

~Anthony Burgess

Writers are rarely their own best critics, nor are critics.

~Anthony Burgess

A novelist should not be too intelligent either, although... he may be permitted to be an intellectual.

~Anthony Burgess

I've always felt that English women had to be approached in a sisterly manner, rather than an erotic manner.

~Anthony Burgess

But we were all feeling that bit shagged and fagged and fashed, it having been an evening of some small energy expenditure.

~Anthony Burgess

Without class differences, England would cease to be the living theatre it is.

~Anthony Burgess

John Kenneth Galbraith and Marshall McLuhan are the two greatest modern Canadians that the U.S. has produced.

~Anthony Burgess

I wrote much because I was paid little. I had no great desire to leave a literary name behind me.

~Anthony Burgess

You have no idea how pleasant it is not to have any future. It's like having a totally efficient contraceptive.

~Anthony Burgess

Reviewers do not read books with much care . . . their profession is more given to stupidity and malice and literary ignorance even than the profession of novelist.

~Anthony Burgess

To devastate is easier and more spectacular than to create.

~Anthony Burgess

Great Music, it said, and Great Poetry would like quieten Modern Youth down and make Modern Youth more Civilized. Civilized my syphilised yarbles.

~Anthony Burgess

It'll be your own torture," he said, serious. "I hope to God it'll torture you to madness.

~Anthony Burgess

I don't write out of fear. I write out of a strong urge to meet death on its own eternal terms, because the fact is that if you write as little as a page of prose-even bad prose-that is eternal.

~Anthony Burgess

A character, to be acceptable as more than a chess piece, has to be ignorant of the future, unsure about the past, and not at all sure of what he's supposed to be doing.

~Anthony Burgess

Civilised my syphilised yarbles.

~Anthony Burgess

The trouble began with Forster. After him it was considered ungentlemanly to write more than five or six novels.

~Anthony Burgess

Eat this sweetish segment or spit it out. You are free.

~Anthony Burgess

We only need to wear shoes because the British built roads which hurt our feet.

~Anthony Burgess

A work of fiction should be, for its author, a journey into the unknown, and the prose should convey the difficulties of the journey.

~Anthony Burgess

Life's only choosing when to die. Life's a big postponement because the choice is so difficult. It's a tremendous relief not to have to choose.

~Anthony Burgess

I was always on my oddy knocky.

~Anthony Burgess

Blessed tree and blessed birds, that were to be neither saved nor damned.

~Anthony Burgess

The adult relation to books is one of absorbing rather than being absorbed.

~Anthony Burgess

A word in a dictionary is very much like a car in a mammoth motor

show - full of potential but temporarily inactive.

~Anthony Burgess

I was cured all right.

~Anthony Burgess

And to all others in this story profound shooms of lip music brrrrrr. And they can kiss my sharries.

~Anthony Burgess

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