

Cynthia Ozick

Quotes

*Writing, Book, Reading, Inspirational, Ideas, People, Literature, Thinking,
Travel, Imagination, Time, Self, Civilization, Taken, Form, Order, Play, Use,
Death, Done*

We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude.

~Cynthia Ozick

What we remember from childhood we remember forever - permanent ghosts, stamped, inked, imprinted, eternally seen.

~Cynthia Ozick

After a certain number of years, our faces become our biographies.

~Cynthia Ozick

To want to be what one can be is purpose in life.

~Cynthia Ozick

If we had to say what writing is, we would have to define it essentially as an act of courage.

~Cynthia Ozick

Is there a word more passionate than passion? Obsession, total immersion, the feeling that everything else doesn't matter.

~Cynthia Ozick

In saying what is obvious, never choose cunning. Yelling works better.

~Cynthia Ozick

The power of language, it seems to me, is the only kind of power a writer is entitled to.

~Cynthia Ozick

To imagine the unimaginable is the highest use of the imagination

~Cynthia Ozick

Travelers are fantasists, conjurers, seers - and what they finally discover is that every round object everywhere is a crystal ball: stone,

teapot, the marvelous globe of the human eye.

~Cynthia Ozick

Traveling is seeing; it is the implicit that we travel by.

~Cynthia Ozick

Two things remain irretrievable: time and a first impression.

~Cynthia Ozick

I wanted to use what I was, to be what I was born to be - not to have a 'career', but to be that straightforward obvious unmistakable animal, a writer.

~Cynthia Ozick

It is the function of a liberal university not to give right answers, but to ask right questions.

~Cynthia Ozick

The engineering is secondary to the vision.

~Cynthia Ozick

Time heals all things but one: Time.

~Cynthia Ozick

Resentment is a communicable disease and should be quarantined.

~Cynthia Ozick

The art of fiction is freedom of will for your characters.

~Cynthia Ozick

The imagination is a species of knowledge, knowledge that can take the form of discovery.

~Cynthia Ozick

I measure my life in sentences pressed out, line by line, like the lustrous ooze on the underside of the snail, the snail's secret open seam, its wound, leaking attar.

~Cynthia Ozick

Why do men carry guns and build prison camps, when the nurturing earth is made for freedom?

~Cynthia Ozick

In books, as in life, there are no second chances. On second thought: its the next work, still to be written, that offers the second chance.

~Cynthia Ozick

Bohemia and all its works are vanished out of America; or, more exactly, bohemia has migrated to the middle class, and is alive and well in condo and suburb.

~Cynthia Ozick

It is useless either to hate or to love truth - but it should be noticed.

~Cynthia Ozick

Time at length becomes justice.

~Cynthia Ozick

The butterfly lures us not only because he is beautiful, but because he is transitory. The caterpillar is uglier, but in him we can regard the better joy of becoming.

~Cynthia Ozick

To be any sort of competent writer one must keep one's psychological distance from the supreme artists.

~Cynthia Ozick

Nothing is so awesomely unfamiliar as the familiar that discloses itself

at the end of a journey. Nothing shakes the heart so much as meeting-far, far away-what you last met at home.

~Cynthia Ozick

We were born to die; we were born to endure, on the way to death, sorrow-sorrow in manifold shapes.

~Cynthia Ozick

The ordinary is the divine.

~Cynthia Ozick

He who cries, 'What do I care about universality? I only know what is in me,' does not know even that.

~Cynthia Ozick

Paradise is only for those who have already been there.

~Cynthia Ozick

It isn't the instrument that influences High-Minded or Low-Minded; it's the quality of Mind itself.

~Cynthia Ozick

We are so placid that the smallest tremor of objection is taken as a full-scale revolution.

~Cynthia Ozick

In the compact between novelist and reader, the novelist promises to lie, and the reader promises to allow it.

~Cynthia Ozick

In real life wishing, divorced from willing, is sterile and begets nothing.

~Cynthia Ozick

All politicians know that every 'temporary' political initiative promised as

a short-term poultice stays on the books forever.

~Cynthia Ozick

We have had, alas, and still have, the doubtful habit of reverence. Above all, we respect things as they are.

~Cynthia Ozick

I read in order to write. I read out of obsession with writing.

~Cynthia Ozick

The secular Jew is a figment; when a Jew becomes a secular person he is no longer a Jew.

~Cynthia Ozick

If ideas are what feed serious literature and arresting language, who today is writing a novel of ideas (which can often mean comedy)? I think of Joshua Cohen. Who else?

~Cynthia Ozick

To listen acutely is to be powerless, even if you sit on a throne.

~Cynthia Ozick

literature is an instrument of a culture, not a summary of it.

~Cynthia Ozick

The usefulness of madmen is famous: they demonstrate society's logic flagrantly carried out down to its last scrimshaw scrap.

~Cynthia Ozick

Women who write with an overriding consciousness that they write as women are engaged not in aspiration toward writing, but chiefly in a politics of sex.

~Cynthia Ozick

Dedication to one's work in the world is the only possible sanctification. Religion in all its forms is dedication to Someone Else's work, not yours.

~Cynthia Ozick

It is true that money attracts; but much money repels.

~Cynthia Ozick

Of comic novels that have quaffed the elixir of 'classic': Zuleika Dobson by Max Beerbohm.

~Cynthia Ozick

Life is that which - pressingly, persistently, unfailingly, imperially - interrupts.

~Cynthia Ozick

I can't claim to be disenchanted "with the current state of fiction" because I read so little of it. My reading is mostly drawn to history.

~Cynthia Ozick

Comedy springs from the ludicrous; but the ludicrous is stuck in the muck of reality, resolutely hostile to what is impossible.

~Cynthia Ozick

Much of the academy on the humanities side, English departments in particular, no longer write what can pass for normal English.

~Cynthia Ozick

Advances in technology neither impede nor augment literature.

~Cynthia Ozick

To desire to be what one can be is purpose in life. There are no exterior forces. There are only interior forces. Who squanders talent praises death.

~Cynthia Ozick

Awe consumes any brand that ignites it.

~Cynthia Ozick

Every writer aspires to recognition , and it comes entirely privately, without public fanfare, each time a piece of work is judged worthy of publication.

~Cynthia Ozick

History ... isn't simply what has happened. It's a judgment on what has happened.

~Cynthia Ozick

Language makes culture, and we make a rotten culture when we abuse words.

~Cynthia Ozick

Whoever mourns the dead mourns himself.

~Cynthia Ozick

Godlessness invariably produces vulgarity. Civilization is the product of belief.

~Cynthia Ozick

Old saws have no teeth.

~Cynthia Ozick

One reason writers write is out of revenge.

~Cynthia Ozick

What I felt then I feel now: the inexorable, unchanging interior hum of doubt and hope.

~Cynthia Ozick

Wars, invented and organized by the highest available consciousnesses (do the worms go to war? do the fish? do the paramecia?), are the planet's chief source and cause of torment.

~Cynthia Ozick

The imagination has resources and intimations we don't even know about.

~Cynthia Ozick

What we think we are surely going to do, we don't do; and what we never intended to do, we may one day notice that we have done, and done, and done.

~Cynthia Ozick

very bright teeth as big and orderly as piano keys.

~Cynthia Ozick

Above all, a book is a riverbank for the river of language. Language without the riverbank is only television talk - a free fall, a loose splash, a spill.

~Cynthia Ozick

Real apprenticeship is ultimately always to the self.

~Cynthia Ozick

Death persecutes before it executes.

~Cynthia Ozick

The trouble with happiness is that it never notices itself.

~Cynthia Ozick

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