

# Cyril Connolly

## Quotes

*Literature, Writing, Men, Art, People, Love, Book, Atheism, Dream, Hate, Civilization, Reality, Past, Lying, Passion, Pain, Years, Country, Two, War*

Fallen leaves lying on the grass in the November sun bring more happiness than the daffodils.

~Cyril Connolly

Green leaves on a dead tree is our epitaph-green leaves, dear reader, on a dead tree.

~Cyril Connolly

He [George Orwell] would not blow his nose without moralising on conditions in the handkerchief industry.

~Cyril Connolly

There is no more sombre enemy of good art than the pram in the hall.

~Cyril Connolly

We may assume that we keep people waiting symbolically because we do not wish to see them and that our anxiety is due not to being late, but to having to see them at all.

~Cyril Connolly

Better to write for yourself and have no public, than to write for the public and have no self.

~Cyril Connolly

No city should be too large for a man to walk out of in a morning.

~Cyril Connolly

The true index of a man's character is the health of his wife.

~Cyril Connolly

There are many who dare not kill themselves for fear of what the neighbours will say.

~Cyril Connolly

While thoughts exist, words are alive and literature becomes an escape, not from, but into living.

~Cyril Connolly

All charming people have something to conceal, usually their total dependence on the appreciation of others.

~Cyril Connolly

Except for poverty, incompatibility, opposition of parents, absence of love on one side and of desire to marry on both, nothing stands in the way of our happy union.

~Cyril Connolly

Vulgarity is the garlic in the salad of charm.

~Cyril Connolly

Hate is the consequence of fear; we fear something before we hate; a child who fears noises becomes the man who hates them.

~Cyril Connolly

As repressed sadists are supposed to become policemen or butchers so those with an irrational fear of life become publishers.

~Cyril Connolly

In the sex war, thoughtlessness is the weapon of the male, vindictiveness of the female.

~Cyril Connolly

Industrial society seems likely to be entering a period of severe stress, due in part to problems of human behavior and in part to economic and environmental problems

~Cyril Connolly

Life is a maze in which we take the wrong turning before we have

learned to walk.

~Cyril Connolly

Purity engenders Wisdom, Passion avarice, and Ignorance folly, infatuation and darkness.

~Cyril Connolly

The secret of success is to be in harmony with existence, to be always calm to let each wave of life wash us a little farther up the shore.

~Cyril Connolly

It is after creation, in the elation of success, or the gloom of failure, that love becomes essential.

~Cyril Connolly

Marriage is the permanent conversation between two people who talk over everything and everyone until death breaks the record.

~Cyril Connolly

If one is too lazy to think, too vain to do a thing badly, too cowardly to admit it, one will never attain wisdom.

~Cyril Connolly

Miserable Orpheus who, turning to lose his Eurydice, beholds her for the first time as well as the last.

~Cyril Connolly

There is no suicide for which all society is not responsible.

~Cyril Connolly

The reward of art is not fame or success but intoxication.

~Cyril Connolly

The English language is like a broad river on whose bank a few patient

anglers are sitting, while, higher up, the stream is being polluted by a string of refuse-barges tipping out their muck.

~Cyril Connolly

Imagination is nostalgia for the past, the absent it is the liquid solution in which art develops the snapshot of reality.

~Cyril Connolly

It is the fear of middle-age in the young, of old-age in the middle-aged, which is the prime cause of infidelity, that infallible rejuvenator.

~Cyril Connolly

From now on - specialize; never again make any concession to the ninety-nine percent of you which is like everyon else at the expense of the one percent which is unique.

~Cyril Connolly

We must select the illusion which appeals to our temperament, and embrace it with passion, if we want to be happy.

~Cyril Connolly

Everything is a dangerous drug except reality which is unendurable.

~Cyril Connolly

Slums may well be breeding grounds of crime, but middle class suburbs are incubators of apathy and delirium.

~Cyril Connolly

Youth is a period of missed opportunities.

~Cyril Connolly

Obesity is a mental state, a disease brought on by boredom and disappointment.

~Cyril Connolly

The one way to get thin is to re-establish a purpose in life.

~Cyril Connolly

No-one was ever made wretched in a brothel.

~Cyril Connolly

That sinister Stonehenge of economic man, Rockefeller Center.

~Cyril Connolly

It is only in the country that we can get to know a person or a book.

~Cyril Connolly

Idleness is only a coarse name for my infinite capacity for living in the present.

~Cyril Connolly

The books I haven't written are better than the books other people have.

~Cyril Connolly

Greed, like the love of comfort, is a kind of fear.

~Cyril Connolly

Words today are like the shells and rope of seaweed which a child brings home glistening from the beach and which in an hour have lost their luster.

~Cyril Connolly

A woman's desire for revenge outlasts all her other emotions.

~Cyril Connolly

A lazy person, whatever the talents with which he set out, will have condemned himself to second-hand thoughts and to second-rate friends.

~Cyril Connolly

The dread of loneliness is greater than the fear of bondage, so we get married.

~Cyril Connolly

The past is the only dead thing that smells sweet.

~Cyril Connolly

How many books did Renoir write on how to paint?

~Cyril Connolly

A life based on reason will always require to be balanced by an occasional bout of violent and irrational emotion, for instinctual drives must be satisfied

~Cyril Connolly

The civilization of one epoch becomes the manure of the next.

~Cyril Connolly

The worst vice of the solitary is the worship of his food.

~Cyril Connolly

Nothing dates like hate and in literature a little of it goes a very long way.

~Cyril Connolly

The only way for writers to meet is to share a quick peek over a common lamp-post.

~Cyril Connolly

The headmistress was an able instructress in French and history and we learned with her as fast as fear could teach us.

~Cyril Connolly

Literature is the art of writing something that will be read twice; journalism what will be grasped at once.

~Cyril Connolly

A great writer created a world of his own and his readers are proud to live in it. A lesser writer may entice them in for a moment, but soon he will watch them filing out.

~Cyril Connolly

Our memories are card indexes consulted and then returned in disorder by authorities whom we do not control.

~Cyril Connolly

We are all serving a life sentence in the dungeon of the self.

~Cyril Connolly

The friendships which last are those wherein each friend respects the other's dignity to the point of not really wanting anything from him.

~Cyril Connolly

When in doubt, choose greatness.

~Cyril Connolly

Always be nice to those younger than you, because they are the ones who will be writing about you.

~Cyril Connolly

When young we are faithful to individuals, when older we grow loyal to situations and to types.

~Cyril Connolly

Classical and romantic: private language of a family quarrel, a dead dispute over the distribution of emphasis between man and nature.

~Cyril Connolly



Like those crabs which dress themselves with seaweed, we wear belief and custom.

~Cyril Connolly

The civilized are those who get more out of life than the uncivilized, and for this we are not likely to be forgiven.

~Cyril Connolly

Boys do not grow up gradually. They move forward in spurts like the hands of clocks in railway stations.

~Cyril Connolly

Imprisoned in every fat man a thin one is wildly signalling to be let out.

~Cyril Connolly

There cannot be a personal God without a pessimistic religion. As soon as there is a personal God he is a disappointing God.

~Cyril Connolly

Civilization is maintained by a very few people in a small number of places and we need only some bombs and a few prisons to blot it out altogether.

~Cyril Connolly

The river of truth is always splitting up into arms that reunite. Islanded between them, the inhabitants argue for a lifetime as to which is the mainstream.

~Cyril Connolly

Civilization is an active deposit which is formed by the combustion of the Present with the Past. Neither in countries without a Present nor in those without a Past is it to be discovered.

~Cyril Connolly

No one can achieve Serenity until the glare of passion is past the meridian.

~Cyril Connolly

Those of us who were brought up as Christians and have lost our faith have retained the sense of sin without the saving belief in redemption. This poisons our thought and so paralyses us in action.

~Cyril Connolly

Like water, we are truest to our nature in repose.

~Cyril Connolly

Peace ... is a morbid condition, due to a surplus of civilians, which war seeks to remedy.

~Cyril Connolly

Longevity is the revenge of talent upon genius.

~Cyril Connolly

The true function of a writer is to produce a masterpiece and no other task is of any consequence.

~Cyril Connolly

We fear something before we hate.

~Cyril Connolly

We love but once, for once only are we perfectly equipped for loving.

~Cyril Connolly

It is a mistake to expect good work from expatriates for it is not what they do that matters but what they are not doing.

~Cyril Connolly

Today the function of the artist is to bring imagination to science and

science to imagination, where they meet, in the myth.

~Cyril Connolly

The lesson one can learn from Firbank is that of inconsequence. There is the vein which he tapped and which has not yet been fully exploited.

~Cyril Connolly

The shock, for an intelligent writer, of discovering for the first time that there are people younger than himself who think him stupid is severe.

~Cyril Connolly

For what is liberty but the unhampered translation of will into act?

~Cyril Connolly

The true work of art is the one which the seventh wave of genius throws up the beach where the undertow of time cannot drag it back.

~Cyril Connolly

The artist is a member of the leisured classes who cannot pay for his leisure.

~Cyril Connolly

Optimism and self-pity are the positive and negative poles of modern cowardice.

~Cyril Connolly

Whom the gods wish to destroy they first call promising.

~Cyril Connolly

When we have ceased to love the stench of the human animal, either in others or in ourselves, then are we condemned to misery, and clear thinking can begin.

~Cyril Connolly

Believing in Hell must distort every judgement on this life.

~Cyril Connolly

We cannot be happy until we can love ourselves without egotism and our friends without tyranny.

~Cyril Connolly

The man who is master of his passions is Reason's slave.

~Cyril Connolly

We create the world in which we live; if that world becomes unfit for human life, it is because we tire of our responsibility.

~Cyril Connolly

Like the bee its sting, the promiscuous leave behind them in each encounter something of themselves by which they are made to suffer.

~Cyril Connolly

The Expulsion from Eden is an act of vindictive womanish spite; the Fall of Man, as recounted in the Bible, comes nearer to the Fall of God.

~Cyril Connolly

Most people do not believe in anything very much and our greatest poetry is given to us by those who do.

~Cyril Connolly

Approaching forty, I had a singular dream in which I almost grasped the meaning and understood the nature of what it is that wastes in wasted time.

~Cyril Connolly

Everyone has the right to express an opinion. No one has the right to be listened to.

~Cyril Connolly

In my religion, there would be no exclusive doctrine; all would be love, poetry, and doubt.

~Cyril Connolly

An author arrives at a good style when his language performs what is required of it without shyness.

~Cyril Connolly

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