

# Hannah Arendt

## Quotes

*Men, Thinking, Political, Evil, World, People, Reality, Past, Peace, Lying, War,  
Power, May, Mean, Life, Violence, Freedom, Art, Action, Law*

The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the dedicated communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction, true and false, no longer exists.

~Hannah Arendt

The sad truth is that most evil is done by people who never make up their minds to be good or evil.

~Hannah Arendt

When evil is allowed to compete with good, evil has an emotional populist appeal that wins out unless good men and women stand as a vanguard against abuse.

~Hannah Arendt

Politically, the weakness of the argument has always been that those who choose the lesser evil forget very quickly that they chose evil.

~Hannah Arendt

This is the precept by which I have lived: Prepare for the worst; expect the best; and take what comes.

~Hannah Arendt

The greatest enemy of authority, therefore, is contempt, and the surest way to undermine it is laughter.

~Hannah Arendt

One of the greatest advantages of the totalitarian elites of the twenties and thirties was to turn any statement of fact into a question of motive.

~Hannah Arendt

There is a strange interdependence between thoughtlessness and evil.

~Hannah Arendt

Forgiveness is the key to action and freedom.

~Hannah Arendt

There are no dangerous thoughts; thinking itself is dangerous.

~Hannah Arendt

Only the hypocrite is really rotten to the core.

~Hannah Arendt

Revolutionaries do not make revolutions. The revolutionaries are those who know when power is lying in the street and then they can pick it up.

~Hannah Arendt

Love, by its very nature, is unworldly, and it is for this reason rather than its rarity that it is not only apolitical but antipolitical, perhaps the most powerful of all antipolitical forces.

~Hannah Arendt

The aim of totalitarian education has never been to instill convictions but to destroy the capacity to form any.

~Hannah Arendt

Political questions are far too serious to be left to the politicians.

~Hannah Arendt

The practice of violence, like all action, changes the world, but the most probable change is a more violent world.

~Hannah Arendt

Storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it.

~Hannah Arendt

The trouble with lying and deceiving is that their efficiency depends entirely upon a clear notion of the truth that the liar and deceiver wishes

to hide.

~Hannah Arendt

Cliches, stock phrases, adherence to conventional, standardized codes of expression and conduct have the socially recognized function of protecting us against reality.

~Hannah Arendt

Wherever the relevance of speech is at stake, matters become political by definition, for speech is what makes man a political being.

~Hannah Arendt

Men in plural [â€¦] can experience meaningfulness only because they can talk with and make sense to each other and themselves.

~Hannah Arendt

The most radical revolutionary will become a conservative the day after the revolution.

~Hannah Arendt

Evil thrives on apathy and cannot exist without it.

~Hannah Arendt

I'm completely against [feminism]. I have no desire to give up my privileges.

~Hannah Arendt

Loving life is easy when you are abroad. Where no one knows you and you hold your life in your hands all alone, you are more master of yourself than at any other time

~Hannah Arendt

To think and to be fully alive are the same.

~Hannah Arendt

All political institutions are manifestations and materializations of power; they petrify and decay as soon as the living power of the people ceases to uphold them.

~Hannah Arendt

The chief qualification of a mass leader has become unending infallibility; he can never admit an error.

~Hannah Arendt

In order to go on living one must try to escape the death involved in perfectionism.

~Hannah Arendt

Only the mob and the elite can be attracted by the momentum of totalitarianism itself. The masses have to be won by propaganda.

~Hannah Arendt

We are free to change the world and start something new in it.

~Hannah Arendt

Nobody is the author or producer of his own life story ... somebody began it and is its subject in the twofold sense, namely, its actor and sufferer ... but nobody is the author.

~Hannah Arendt

No cause is left but the most ancient of all, the one, in fact, that from the beginning of our history has determined the very existence of politics, the cause of freedom versus tyranny.

~Hannah Arendt

Forgiveness is the only way to reverse the irreversible flow of history.

~Hannah Arendt

Although tyranny...may successfully rule over foreign peoples, it can

stay in power only if it destroys first of all the national institutions of its own people.

~Hannah Arendt

Only crime and the criminal, it is true, confront us with the perplexity of radical evil; but only the hypocrite is really rotten to the core.

~Hannah Arendt

If the ability to tell right from wrong should have anything to do with the ability to think, then we must be able to 'demand' its exercise in every sane person no matter how erudite or ignorant.

~Hannah Arendt

Economic growth may one day turn out to be a curse rather than a good, and under no conditions can it either lead into freedom or constitute a proof for its existence.

~Hannah Arendt

The earth is the very quintessence of the human condition.

~Hannah Arendt

where everybody is guilty, nobody is.

~Hannah Arendt

If we don't know our own history, we are deemed to live it.

~Hannah Arendt

What I propose, therefore, is very simple: it is nothing more than to think what we are doing

~Hannah Arendt

To expect truth to come from thinking signifies that we mistake the need to think with the urge to know.

~Hannah Arendt

By its very nature the beautiful is isolated from everything else. From beauty no road leads to reality.

~Hannah Arendt

As citizens, we must prevent wrongdoing because the world in which we all live, wrong-doer, wrong sufferer and spectator, is at stake.

~Hannah Arendt

Power and violence are opposites; where the one rules absolutely, the other is absent. Violence appears where power is in jeopardy, but left to its own course it ends in power's disappearance.

~Hannah Arendt

The climax of terror is reached when the police state begins to devour its own children, when yesterday's executioner becomes today's victim.

~Hannah Arendt

Promises are the uniquely human way of ordering the future, making it predictable and reliable to the extent that this is humanly possible.

~Hannah Arendt

Thought and action must never part company.

~Hannah Arendt

Every organization of men, be it social or political, ultimately relies on man's capacity for making promises and keeping them.

~Hannah Arendt

Every activity performed in public can attain an excellence never matched in privacy; for excellence, by definition, the presence of others is always required.

~Hannah Arendt

Under conditions of tyranny it is far easier to act than to think.

~Hannah Arendt

Nothing we use or hear or touch can be expressed in words that equal what is given by the senses.

~Hannah Arendt

In the era of imperialism, businessmen became politicians and were acclaimed as statesmen, while statesmen were taken seriously only if they talked the language of successful businessmen.

~Hannah Arendt

Generally speaking, violence always arises out of impotence. It is the hope of those who have no power.

~Hannah Arendt

Culture relates to objects and is a phenomenon of the world; entertainment relates to people and is a phenomenon of life.

~Hannah Arendt

With the rise of Christianity, faith replaced thought as the bringer of immortality.

~Hannah Arendt

Promises are the uniquely human way of ordering the future.

~Hannah Arendt

Truthfulness has never been counted among the political virtues, and lies have always been regarded as justifiable tools in political dealings.

~Hannah Arendt

A theology which is not based on revelation as a given reality but treats God as an idea would be as mad as a zoology which is no longer sure of the physical, tangible existence of animals.

~Hannah Arendt



Nihilism is but the other side of conventionalism; its creed consists of negations of the current so-called positive values, to which it remains bound.

~Hannah Arendt

Power is actualized only when word and deed have not parted company.

~Hannah Arendt

Poetry, whose material is language, is perhaps the most human and least worldly of the arts, the one in which the end product remains closest to the thought that inspired it.

~Hannah Arendt

Equality...is the result of human organization. We are not born equal.

~Hannah Arendt

The presence of others who see what we see and hear what we hear assures us of the reality of the world and ourselves.

~Hannah Arendt

Solitude is the human condition in which I keep myself company. Loneliness comes about when I am alone without being able to split up into the two-in-one, without being able to keep myself company.

~Hannah Arendt

We all carry fault within.

~Hannah Arendt

Few girls are as well shaped as a good horse.

~Hannah Arendt

Man cannot be free if he does not know that he is subject to necessity, because his freedom is always won in his never wholly successful

attempts to liberate himself from necessity.

~Hannah Arendt

The Third World is not a reality but an ideology.

~Hannah Arendt

Man's chief moral deficiency appears to be not his indiscretions but his reticence.

~Hannah Arendt

Bureaucracy, the rule of nobody.

~Hannah Arendt

One must think with the body and the soul or not think at all.

~Hannah Arendt

Action without a name, a who attached to it, is meaningless.

~Hannah Arendt

No argument can persuade me to like oysters if I do not like them. In other words, the disturbing thing about matters of taste is that they are not communicable.

~Hannah Arendt

The strength of even the strongest individual can always be overpowered by the many, who often will combine for no other purpose than to ruin strength precisely because of its peculiar independence.

~Hannah Arendt

Conscience is the anticipation of the fellow who awaits you if and when you come home.

~Hannah Arendt

The possible redemption from the predicament of irreversibility - of

being unable to undo what one has done - is the faculty of forgiving.

~Hannah Arendt

Fear is an emotion indispensable for survival.

~Hannah Arendt

No punishment has ever possessed enough power of deterrence to prevent the commission of crimes.

~Hannah Arendt

Every end in history necessarily contains a new beginning.

~Hannah Arendt

if we do not know our own history, we are doomed to live it as though it were our private fate.

~Hannah Arendt

Violence can destroy power; it is utterly incapable of creating it.

~Hannah Arendt

Thinking does not lead to truth; truth is the beginning of thought.

~Hannah Arendt

The defiance of established authority, religious and secular, social and political, as a world-wide phenomenon may well one day be accounted the outstanding event of the last decade.

~Hannah Arendt

What I cannot live with may not bother another man's conscience. The result is that conscience will stand against conscience.

~Hannah Arendt

Action, as distinguished from fabrication, is never possible in isolation; to be isolated is to be deprived of the capacity to act.

~Hannah Arendt

The ultimate end of human acts is eudaimonia, happiness in the sense of living well, which all men desire; all acts are but different means chosen to arrive at it.

~Hannah Arendt

The conviction that everything that happens on earth must be comprehensible to man can lead to interpreting history by commonplaces.

~Hannah Arendt

thinking beings have an urge to speak, speaking beings have an urge to think.

~Hannah Arendt

the rule of Nobody ... is what the political form known as bureaucracy truly is.

~Hannah Arendt

Poets are the only people to whom love is not only a crucial, but an indispensable experience, which entitles them to mistake it for a universal one.

~Hannah Arendt

It is in the nature of a group and its power to turn against independence, the property of individual strength.

~Hannah Arendt

To be free in an age like ours, one must be in a position of authority. That in itself would be enough to make me ambitious.

~Hannah Arendt

Total loyalty is possible only when fidelity is emptied of all concrete

content, from which changes of mind might naturally arise.

~Hannah Arendt

These are the fifties, you know. The disgusting, posturing fifties.

~Hannah Arendt

Death not merely ends life, it also bestows upon it a silent completeness, snatched from the hazardous flux to which all things human are subject.

~Hannah Arendt

Every thought is an afterthought.

~Hannah Arendt

The point, as Marx saw it, is that dreams never come true.

~Hannah Arendt

We have almost succeeded in leveling all human activities to the common denominator of securing the necessities of life and providing for their abundance.

~Hannah Arendt

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