

# Herbert Read Quotes

*Art, Literature, Men, Artist, Feelings, Mean, Progress, Modern, Real, Civilization,  
May, Past, Personality, Independent, Believe, War, Mind, Individual, Dull,  
Thinking*

The principle of equity first came into evidence in Roman jurisprudence and was derived by analogy from the physical meaning of the word.

~Herbert Read

I am not going to claim that modern anarchism has any direct relation to Roman jurisprudence; but I do claim that it has its basis in the laws of nature rather than in the state of nature.

~Herbert Read

A man of personality can formulate ideals, but only a man of character can achieve them.

~Herbert Read

I can imagine no society which does not embody some method of arbitration.

~Herbert Read

The most general law in nature is equity-the principle of balance and symmetry which guides the growth of forms along the lines of the greatest structural efficiency.

~Herbert Read

The sensitive artist knows that a bitter wind is blowing.

~Herbert Read

Love works miracles in stillness.

~Herbert Read

Progress is measured by richness and intensity of experience - by a wider and deeper apprehension of the significance and scope of human existence.

~Herbert Read

Art is pattern informed by sensibility.

~Herbert Read

Great changes in the destiny of mankind can be effected only in the minds of little children.

~Herbert Read

The work of art... is an instrument for tilling the human psyche, that it may continue to yield a harvest of vital beauty.

~Herbert Read

Spontaneity is not enough - or, to be more exact, spontaneity is not possible until there is an unconscious coordination of form, space and vision.

~Herbert Read

The modern work of art, as I have said, is a symbol.

~Herbert Read

That is why I believe that art is so much more significant than either economics or philosophy. It is the direct measure of man's spiritual vision.

~Herbert Read

Simplicity is not a goal, but one arrives at simplicity in spite of oneself, as one approaches the real meaning of things.

~Herbert Read

Art is an indecent exposure of the consciousness.

~Herbert Read

Revolt, it will be said, implies violence; but this is an outmoded, an incompetent conception of revolt. The most effective form of revolt in this violent world we live in is non-violence.

~Herbert Read

It was play rather than work which enabled man to evolve his higher faculties - everything we mean by the word 'culture'.

~Herbert Read

What I do deny is that you can build any enduring society without some such mystical ethos.

~Herbert Read

I have not the slightest doubt that this form of individuation represents a higher stage in the evolution of mankind.

~Herbert Read

Works of art must persist as objects of contemplation.

~Herbert Read

In general, modern art... has been inspired by a natural desire to chart the uncharted.

~Herbert Read

The sense of historical continuity, and a feeling for philosophical rectitude cannot, however, be compromised.

~Herbert Read

I call religion a natural authority, but it has usually been conceived as a supernatural authority.

~Herbert Read

The farther a society progresses, the more clearly the individual becomes the antithesis of the group.

~Herbert Read

Progress is measured by the degree of differentiation within a society.

~Herbert Read

The characteristic political attitude of today is not one of positive belief, but of despair.

~Herbert Read

The point I am making is that in the more primitive forms of society the individual is merely a unit; in more developed forms of society he is an independent personality.

~Herbert Read

It is already clear, after twenty years of socialism in Russia, that if you do not provide your society with a new religion, it will gradually revert to the old one.

~Herbert Read

If the individual is a unit in a corporate mass, his life is not merely brutish and short, but dull and mechanical.

~Herbert Read

You might think that it would be the natural desire of every man to develop as an independent personality, but this does not seem to be true.

~Herbert Read

My own early experiences in war led me to suspect the value of discipline, even in that sphere where it is so often regarded as the first essential for success.

~Herbert Read

If we persist in our restless desire to know everything about the universe and ourselves, then we must not be afraid of what the artist brings back from his voyage of discovery.

~Herbert Read

In the evolution of mankind there has always been a certain degree of

social coherence.

~Herbert Read

Creeds and castes, and all forms of intellectual and emotional grouping, belong to the past.

~Herbert Read

It does not seem that the contradiction which exists between the aristocratic function of art and the democratic structure of modern society can ever be resolved.

~Herbert Read

I know of no better name than Anarchism.

~Herbert Read

The fundamental purpose of the artist is the same as that of a scientist: to state a fact.

~Herbert Read

Man is everywhere still in chains.

~Herbert Read

To realize that new world we must prefer the values of freedom and equality above all other values - above personal wealth, technical power and nationalism.

~Herbert Read

It was Nietzsche who first made us conscious of the significance of the individual as a term in the evolutionary process-in that part of the evolutionary process which has still to take place.

~Herbert Read

If modern art has produced symbols that are unfamiliar, that was only to be expected.

~Herbert Read

We may be sure that out of the ruins of our capitalist civilization a new religion will emerge, just as Christianity emerged from the ruins of the Roman civilization.

~Herbert Read

The depths modern art has been exploring are mysterious depths, full of strange fish.

~Herbert Read

Nobody seriously believes in the social philosophies of the immediate past.

~Herbert Read

The great modern heresy in poetry is to confuse the use we make of words in a poem with modalities of speech...For true poetry is never speech but always a song.

~Herbert Read

These are the sensations and feelings that are gradually blunted by education, staled by custom, rejected in favor of social conformity.

~Herbert Read

The only sin is ugliness, and if we believed this with all our being, all other activities of the human spirit could be left to take care of themselves.

~Herbert Read

It is not my purpose as a poet to condemn war (or to be exact, modern warfare). I only wish to present the universal aspects of a particular event.

~Herbert Read

Perhaps it is this theory of all work and no play that has made the Marxist such a very dull boy.

~Herbert Read

Morality, as has often been pointed out, is antecedent to religion-it even exists in a rudimentary form among animals.

~Herbert Read

It will be a gay world. There will be lights everywhere except in the minds of men, and the fall of the last civilization will not be heard above the din.

~Herbert Read

The slave may be happy, but happiness is not enough.

~Herbert Read

The modern artist, by nature and destiny, is always an individualist.

~Herbert Read

Art in its widest sense is the extension of the personality: a host of artificial limbs.

~Herbert Read



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