

Robert Musil

Quotes

Men, Art, People, World, Intellectual, Reality, Ideas, Mean, Average, Book, Life, Feelings, Together, Hands, Lying, Stupidity, Soul, Thinking, Use, Running

And what would you do, ... if you could rule the world for a day? I suppose I would have no choice but to abolish reality.

~Robert Musil

There is nothing in this world as invisible as a monument

~Robert Musil

Layer by layer art strips life bare.

~Robert Musil

One does what one is; one becomes what one does.

~Robert Musil

If there is a sense of reality, there must also be a sense of possibility.

~Robert Musil

Progress would be wonderful - if only it would stop.

~Robert Musil

Stupidity is active in every direction, and can dress up in all the clothes of truth. Truth, on the other hand, has for every occasion only one dress and one path, and is always at a disadvantage.

~Robert Musil

The thought is not something that observes an inner event, but, rather it is this inner event itself. We do not reflect on something, but, rather, something thinks itself in us.

~Robert Musil

One must conform to the baseness of an age or become neurotic.

~Robert Musil

Life forms a surface that acts as if it could not be otherwise, but under its skin things are pounding and pulsing.

~Robert Musil

True' and 'false' are the evasions of people who never want to arrive at a decision. Truth is something without end.

~Robert Musil

... there is a particular propensity in the world for people, wherever they appear in great numbers, to permit themselves collectively everything that would be forbidden them individually.

~Robert Musil

The difference between a healthy person and one who is mentally ill is the fact that the healthy one has all the mental illnesses, and the mentally ill person has only one.

~Robert Musil

The thought came to me that all one loves in art becomes beautiful. Beauty is nothing but the expression of the fact that something is being loved. Only thus could she be defined.

~Robert Musil

It's not the genius who is 100 years ahead of his time but average man who is 100 years behind it.

~Robert Musil

Life is to blame for everything.

~Robert Musil

Mathematics is the bold luxury of pure reason, one of the few that remain today.

~Robert Musil

A politician who climbs high over the bodies of the slain is described as vile or great according to the degree of his success.

~Robert Musil

Ideology is: intellectual ordering of the feelings; an objective connection among them that makes the subjective connection easier.

~Robert Musil

Philosophers are people who do violence, but have no army at their disposal, and so subjugate the world by locking it into a system.

~Robert Musil

It is reality that awakens possibilities, and nothing would be more perverse than to deny it.

~Robert Musil

The truth is not a crystal that can be slipped into one's pocket, but an endless current into which one falls headlong.

~Robert Musil

But how do I get to having to write a book?... It was a mother who bore me, not an inkwell!

~Robert Musil

Only in the most unusual cases is it useful to determine whether a book is good or bad; for it is just as rare for it to be one or the other. It is usually both.

~Robert Musil

[...] a number of flawed individuals can often add up to a brilliant social unit.

~Robert Musil

Anything that endures over time sacrifices its ability to make an impression.

~Robert Musil

Writing [for the novelist] is not an activity, but a condition. That is why one simply can't resume the work when one has a job and a free half-day. Reading is the conveyance of this condition.

~Robert Musil

We do not have too much intellect and too little soul, but too little intellect in matters of the soul.

~Robert Musil

Mathematics is the source of a wicked intellect that, while making man the lord of the earth, also makes him the slave of the machine.

~Robert Musil

He who is allowed to do as he likes will soon run his head into a brick wall out of sheer frustration.

~Robert Musil

Don't you know that every perfect life would be the end of art?

~Robert Musil

All still lifes are actually paintings of the world on the sixth day of creation, when God and the world were alone together, without man!

~Robert Musil

... all professional ideologies are high-minded. Hunters, for instance, would not dream of calling themselves the butchers of the woods.

~Robert Musil

Every word wants to be taken literally, else it decays into a lie. But one mustn't take any word literally, else the world becomes a madhouse.

~Robert Musil

In their field they [mathematicians] do what we ought to be doing in ours. Therein lies the significant lesson ... of their existence. They are

an analogy for the intellectual of the future.

~Robert Musil

Have we not huddled in bunkers, while some premonition of tomorrow hung in the air and a comrade started singing? Oh, it felt so melancholy! And it was kitsch.

~Robert Musil

the restricting of intellectual and spiritual needs to the mania of progress

~Robert Musil

Hardly anyone still reads nowadays. People make use of the writer only in order to work off their own excess energy on him in a perverse manner, in the form of agreement or disagreement.

~Robert Musil

Anyone who still wants to experience fairytales these days can't afford to dither when it comes to using their brains.

~Robert Musil

A man who wants the truth becomes a scientist; a man who wants to give free play to his subjectivity may become a writer; but what should a man do who wants something in between?

~Robert Musil

... for the modern soul, for which it is mere child's play to bridge oceans and continents, there is nothing so impossible as to find the contact with the souls dwelling just around the corner.

~Robert Musil

It is, all in all, a historic error to believe that the master makes the school; the students make it!

~Robert Musil

... the genius never makes anything new, but always something that is just different, and the average talents provide him the possibility within which his genius condenses into achievements.

~Robert Musil

A man can't be angry at his own time without suffering some damage.

~Robert Musil

... there is no such thing as a rational world and a separate irrational world, but only one world containing both.

~Robert Musil

...love must be regarded as one of the religious and dangerous experiences, because it lifts people out of the arms of reason and sets them afloat with no ground under their feet.

~Robert Musil

You see how wrong I go, how ridiculous I'm making myself in your eyes by keeping on guessing wrong like this! Doesn't that help you to come out with it? Come on now!

~Robert Musil

Every day there comes a moment when a person lays his hands in his lap and all his busyness collapses like ashes. The work accomplished is, from the soul's point of view, entirely imaginary.

~Robert Musil

You proclaim that one should die for the highest virtues, because you take it for granted that nobody's been living for them, not even for a single hour.

~Robert Musil

It is life that does the thinking all around us, forming with playful ease the connections our reason can only laboriously patch together

piecemeal, and never to such kaleidoscopic effect.

~Robert Musil

There is, in short, no great idea that stupidity could not put to its own uses [...] The truth by comparison, has only one appearance and only one path, and is always at a disadvantage.

~Robert Musil

What is the use of good painting? We want a spell cast upon the optical part of our existence! We seldom really see the world, but when we do, we become as still as a picture.

~Robert Musil

... the structure of a page of good prose is, analyzed logically, not something frozen but the vibrating of a bridge, which changes with every step one takes on it.

~Robert Musil

The proverbial notion of historical distance consists in our having lost ninety-five of every hundred original facts, so the remaining ones can be arranged however one likes.

~Robert Musil

... the novel is called upon like no other art form to incorporate the intellectual content of an age.

~Robert Musil

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