

Umberto Eco

Quotes

*Book, Writing, Believe, Thinking, People, Men, Mean, World, Lying, Memories,
Two, Passion, Beautiful, Want, Long, Past, Way, War, Real, Years*

When men stop believing in God, it isn't that they then believe in nothing: they believe in everything.

~Umberto Eco

If you interact with things in your life, everything is constantly changing. And if nothing changes, you're an idiot.

~Umberto Eco

I believe that what we become depends on what our fathers teach us at odd moments, when they aren't trying to teach us. We are formed by little scraps of wisdom.

~Umberto Eco

Absence is to love as wind is to fire: it extinguishes the little flame, it fans the big.

~Umberto Eco

There are four types: the cretin, the imbecile, the stupid and the mad. Normality is a balanced mixture of all four.

~Umberto Eco

I love the smell of book ink in the morning.

~Umberto Eco

To survive, you must tell stories.

~Umberto Eco

But Italy is not an intellectual country. On the subway in Tokyo everybody reads. In Italy, they don't. Don't evaluate Italy from the fact that it produced Raphael and Michelangelo.

~Umberto Eco

We are formed by little scraps of wisdom.

~Umberto Eco

Poetry is not a matter of feelings, it is a matter of language. It is language which creates feelings.

~Umberto Eco

Reflecting on these complex relationships between reader and story, fiction and life, can constitute a form of therapy against the sleep of reason, which generates monsters.

~Umberto Eco

A democratic civilization will save itself only if it makes the language of the image into a stimulus for critical reflection - not an invitation for hypnosis.

~Umberto Eco

Then why do you want to know?" "Because learning does not consist only of knowing what we must or we can do, but also of knowing what we could do and perhaps should not do.

~Umberto Eco

Books are not made to be believed, but to be subjected to inquiry. When we consider a book, we mustn't ask ourselves what it says but what it means.

~Umberto Eco

Every great thinker is someone else's moron.

~Umberto Eco

I have come to believe that the whole world is an enigma, a harmless enigma that is made terrible by our own mad attempt to interpret it as though it had an underlying truth.

~Umberto Eco

Love is wiser than wisdom.

~Umberto Eco

We live for books.

~Umberto Eco

Media populism means appealing to people directly through media. A politician who can master the media can shape political affairs outside of parliament and even eliminate the mediation of parliament.

~Umberto Eco

I always assume that a good book is more intelligent than its author. It can say things that the writer is not aware of.

~Umberto Eco

Never affirm, always allude: allusions are made to test the spirit and probe the heart.

~Umberto Eco

I don't miss my youth. I'm glad I had one, but I wouldn't like to start over.

~Umberto Eco

We are always remaking history. Our memory is always an interpretive reconstruction of the past, so is perspective.

~Umberto Eco

What is life if not the shadow of a fleeting dream?

~Umberto Eco

It is necessary to meditate early, and often, on the art of dying to succeed later in doing it properly just once.

~Umberto Eco

Nothing is more fleeting than external form, which withers and alters like the flowers of the field at the appearance of autumn.

~Umberto Eco

When the writer (or the artist in general) says he has worked without giving any thought to the rules of the process, he simply means he was working without realizing he knew the rules.

~Umberto Eco

Since I became a novelist I have discovered that I am biased. Either I think a new novel is worse than mine and I don't like it, or I suspect it is better than my novels and I don't like it.

~Umberto Eco

When the poet is in love, he is incapable of writing poetry on love. He has to write when he remembers that he was in love.

~Umberto Eco

The more things you know, or pretend to know, the more powerful you are. It doesn't matter if the things are true. What counts, remember, is to possess a secret.

~Umberto Eco

I like nicotine because it excites my brain and helps me work.

~Umberto Eco

For the enemy to be recognized and feared, he has to be in your home or on your doorstep.

~Umberto Eco

We like lists because we don't want to die.

~Umberto Eco

I think that at a certain age, say fifteen or sixteen, poetry is like masturbation. But later in life good poets burn their early poetry, and bad poets publish it. Thankfully I gave up rather quickly.

~Umberto Eco

I felt like poisoning a monk.

~Umberto Eco

A dream is a scripture, and many scriptures are nothing but dreams.

~Umberto Eco

The real hero is always a hero by mistake; he dreams of being an honest coward like everybody else.

~Umberto Eco

We live for books. A sweet mission in this world dominated by disorder and decay.

~Umberto Eco

I have lost the freedom of not having an opinion.

~Umberto Eco

Books always speak of other books.

~Umberto Eco

When you are on the dancefloor, there is nothing to do but dance.

~Umberto Eco

When your true enemies are too strong, you have to choose weaker enemies.

~Umberto Eco

That is a real attitude - to see everything as being meaningful, even the less important things, to prove something, even the greater problems of life.

~Umberto Eco

Translation is the art of failure.

~Umberto Eco

You'll come back To me . . . It's written in the stars, you see, you'll come back. You'll come back, it's a fact that I am strong because I do believe in you.

~Umberto Eco

If you want to use television to teach somebody, you must first teach them how to use television.

~Umberto Eco

Libraries have always been humanities' way of preserving its collective wisdom

~Umberto Eco

Fear prophets and those prepared to die for the truth, for as a rule they make many others die with them, often before them, at times instead of them.

~Umberto Eco

True learning must not be content with ideas, which are, in fact, signs, but must discover things in their individual truth.

~Umberto Eco

Writing doesn't mean necessarily putting words on a sheet of paper. You can write a chapter while walking or eating.

~Umberto Eco

I developed a passion for the Middle Ages the same way some people develop a passion for coconuts.

~Umberto Eco

He had prepared his death much earlier, in his imagination, unaware that his imagination, more creative than he, was planning the reality of that death.

~Umberto Eco

I would define the poetic effect as the capacity that a text displays for continuing to generate different readings, without ever being completely consumed.

~Umberto Eco

To read a paper book is another experience: you can do it on a ship, on the branch of a tree, on your bed, even if there is a blackout.

~Umberto Eco

Someone said that patriotism is the last refuge of cowards; those without moral principles usually wrap a flag around themselves, and those bastards always talk about the purity of race.

~Umberto Eco

Nothing gives a fearful man more courage than another's fear.

~Umberto Eco

In the United States there's a Puritan ethic and a mythology of success. He who is successful is good. In Latin countries, in Catholic countries, a successful person is a sinner.

~Umberto Eco

The comic is the perception of the opposite; humor is the feeling of it.

~Umberto Eco

The real hero is always a hero by mistake.

~Umberto Eco

There is only one thing that you write for yourself, and that is a shopping list.

~Umberto Eco

The only truth lies in learning to free ourselves from insane passion for the truth.

~Umberto Eco

A book is a fragile creature. It suffers the wear of time, it fears rodents, the elements, clumsy hands.

~Umberto Eco

There is no great sport in having bullets flying about one in every direction, but I find they have less horror when among them than when in anticipation.

~Umberto Eco

It is obvious that the newspaper produces the opinion of the readers.

~Umberto Eco

If two things don't fit, but you believe both of them, thinking that somewhere, hidden, there must be a third thing that connects them, that's credulity.

~Umberto Eco

Entering a novel is like going on a climb in the mountains: You have to learn the rhythms of respiration - acquire the pace. Otherwise you stop right away.

~Umberto Eco

I've always said that I learned the English I know through two sources -- Marvel Comics and Finnegans Wake.

~Umberto Eco

The cultivated person's first duty is to be always prepared to rewrite the encyclopedia.

~Umberto Eco

I don't see the point of having 80 million people online if all they are doing in the end is talking to ghosts in the suburbs.

~Umberto Eco

A secret is powerful when it is empty.

~Umberto Eco

I love the secrecy of writing fiction. When I write a novel, I don't tell anybody what I'm doing. I'm living in my private world. And it's a great sensation.

~Umberto Eco

An idea you have might not be original. But by creating a novel out of that idea you can make it original.

~Umberto Eco

National identity is the last bastion of the dispossessed. But the meaning of identity is now based on hatred, on hatred for those who are not the same.

~Umberto Eco

I have a good memory. But I would be interested in memory even if I had a bad memory, because I believe that memory is our soul. If we lose our memory completely, we are without a soul.

~Umberto Eco

History is a blood-drenched enigma and the world an error.

~Umberto Eco

As a scholar I am interested in the philosophy of language, semiotics, call it what you want, and one of the main features of the human language is the possibility of lying.

~Umberto Eco

People are tired of simple things. They want to be challenged.

~Umberto Eco

Contemporary societies have lost the sense of the feast but have kept the obscure drive for it.

~Umberto Eco

What does culture want? To make infinity comprehensible.

~Umberto Eco

The function of memory is not only to preserve, but also to throw away. If you remembered everything from your entire life, you would be sick.

~Umberto Eco

I felt no passion, no jealousy, no nostalgia. I was hollow, clear-headed, clean, and as emotionless as an aluminum pot.

~Umberto Eco

Is it possible to say "It was a beautiful morning at the end of November" without feeling like Snoopy?

~Umberto Eco

I enjoyed your article, but I preferred my own.

~Umberto Eco

For many years I have devoted articles and essays to newspapers, from the inside. So criticism of the newspapers was a topic that I practiced for a long time.

~Umberto Eco

Your masters at Oxford have taught you to idolize reason, drying up the prophetic capacities of your heart!

~Umberto Eco

Every European goes on the streets and sees medieval churches. Not if you live in Indianapolis. The most exciting letters I received were from people in places like that.

~Umberto Eco

Man's principle trait is a readiness to believe anything. Otherwise, how could the Church have survived for almost two thousand years in the absence of universal gullibility?

~Umberto Eco

The truth is an anagram of an anagram.

~Umberto Eco

libraries are fascinating places: sometimes you feel you are under the canopy of a railway station, and when you read books about exotic places there's a feeling of travelling to distant lands

~Umberto Eco

From lies to forgeries the step is not so long, and I have written technical essays on the logic of forgeries and on the influence of forgeries on history.

~Umberto Eco

We have a limit, a very discouraging, humiliating limit: death.

~Umberto Eco

The good of a book lies in its being read.

~Umberto Eco

A narrator should not supply interpretations of his work; otherwise he would have not written a novel, which is a machine for generating interpretations.

~Umberto Eco

If somebody writes a book and doesn't care for the survival of that book, he's an imbecile.

~Umberto Eco

I consider always the adult life to be the continuous retrieval of childhood.

~Umberto Eco

Better reality than a dream: if something is real, then it's real and you're not to blame.

~Umberto Eco

American coffee can be a pale solution served at a temperature of 100oC

~Umberto Eco

I have always been fascinated by paranoid people imagining conspiracies. I am fascinated by this in a critical way.

~Umberto Eco

A sure sign of a lunatic is that sooner or later, he brings up the Templars.

~Umberto Eco

The wise man does not discriminate; he gathers all the shreds of light, from wherever they may come.

~Umberto Eco

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