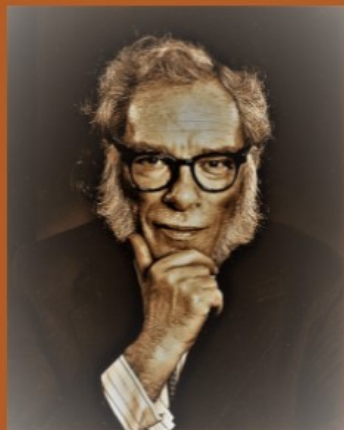


Isaac Asimov
(Murat Durmus)

inside

ISAAC ASIMOV

*QUOTES
&
CONTEMPLATIONS*



*Isaac
Asimov*

inside

ISAAC ASIMOV

QUOTES

&

CONTEMPLATIONS

Murat Durmus

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*“The saddest aspect of life right now is that
science gathers knowledge faster than
society gathers wisdom.”*

~ Isaac Asimov

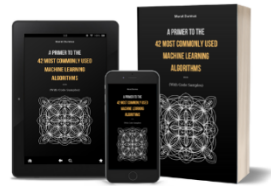
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to the 42 most popular
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not numbers."
~ Richard Hamming*

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but some are useful."
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PREFACE

Isaac Asimov is one of the most famous science fiction authors globally. With his works, he literarily extended the living space of humankind into the universe. In his novels and stories, he dealt particularly intensively with the relationship between humans and robots.

The Good Doctor (called by his fans) was born on January 2, 1920 in the Russian city of Petrovichi near Smolensk. At the age of only three, his family emigrated to the USA. He grew up in the Brooklyn borough of New York.

During his chemistry studies at Columbia University, the young academic contacted the American science fiction scene, which found more and more followers in the 1930s. In 1939, Asimov published his first short story in "Amazing Stories," science fiction magazine. However, it would be a while before he made writing his primary profession.

From scientist to full-time author

After earning his doctorate in biochemistry in 1948, Asimov was offered a lecturer at Boston University. But he didn't stay in the hallowed halls of science for too long. In 1958, he gave up teaching and devoted himself entirely to literature.

Among other things, Asimov gained fame for his "Foundation" trilogy, a galactic, science-fiction series he began at the age of 22.

The first publication of the cycle in book form became a regularly reprinted bestseller. Asimov published more than 500 books,

including numerous scientific works on physics, chemistry, and other natural sciences.

An important reason for his success was also Asimov's unambiguous and straightforward language, with which he could present even complicated relationships in a way that everyone could understand.

Asimov's robot laws

In addition to the "Foundation" cycle, Asimov's robot stories helped him achieve world fame. He also created his robot laws in this context, which are repeatedly quoted in relevant films, books, and TV series.

The first time these laws appeared was in the story "Runaround" in 1942. The term "robotics," which today refers to the science of robot development, was also first mentioned in "Runaround." The original basic rules of robotics were:

- 1: A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm;**
- 2: A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law;**
- 3: A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law;**

Later, Asimov had the robot R. Daneel Olivaw state another, the so-called zeroth robot law in "The Galactic Empire." "**The Zeroth Law: A robot may not harm humanity, or, by inaction, allow humanity to come to harm.**" The other three rules were subordinated to this zeroth law.

Asimov strove to put his novels in chronological order and fill in existing gaps in his late creative years. In addition, he wanted to create a complete science fiction history of humankind from 1982 to a future several thousand years away.

He died on April 6, 1992, due to an HIV infection contracted from a blood transfusion.

Asimov's ideas continued and also inspired many researchers in the field of artificial intelligence. Moreover, his robot laws serve as a guide for many robot developers. This becomes even more important as modern robots acquire more capabilities and autonomy.

He inspired numerous series and films. For example, in an episode of the TV series "Space Patrol Orion" (while Asimov was still alive), robots took control in a mine to prevent people from harming each other further after a confrontation.

The blockbuster "I, Robot," starring Will Smith and inspired by Asimov's short story collection of the same name, also connects to the basic rules of robotics. In the film, police officer Del Spooner (Smith) investigates the alleged suicide of a robotics researcher. Soon, Spooner suspects a robot named Sonny of killing the scientist and thus violating the first robot law.

Be inspired.

Murat Durmus, January 4, 2022
(Frankfurt am Main, Germany)

ISAAC ASIMOV



(January 2, 1920 – April 6, 1992)

The saddest aspect of life right now is that science gathers knowledge faster than society gathers wisdom.

*

Never let your sense of morals prevent you from doing what is right.

*

In life, unlike chess, the game continues after checkmate.

*

Anti-intellectualism has been a constant thread winding its way through our political and cultural life, nurtured by the false

notion that democracy means that 'my ignorance is just as good
as your knowledge.

*

Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them
off every once in a while, or the light won't come in.

*

If my doctor told me I had only six minutes to live, I wouldn't
brood. I'd type a little faster.

*

Life is pleasant. Death is peaceful. It's the transition that's
troublesome.

*

Any planet is 'Earth' to those that live on it.
(Pebble in the Sky (Galactic Empire))

*

The most exciting phrase to hear in science, the one that heralds
the most discoveries, is not "Eureka!" (I found it!) but "That's
funny..."

*

Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent.
(Foundation)

*

Properly read, the Bible is the most potent force for atheism
ever conceived.

*

Self-education is, I firmly believe, the only kind of education
there is.

*

I write for the same reason I breathe - because if I didn't, I
would die.

*

Those people who think they know everything are a great
annoyance to those of us who do.

*

I am an atheist, out and out. It took me a long time to say it. I've
been an atheist for years and years, but somehow I felt it was
intellectually unrespectable to say one was an atheist, because it
assumed knowledge that one didn't have. Somehow, it was
better to say one was a humanist or an agnostic. I finally decided
that I'm a creature of emotion as well as of reason. Emotionally,
I am an atheist. I don't have the evidence to prove that God
doesn't exist, but I so strongly suspect he doesn't that I don't
want to waste my time.

*

Tell me why the stars do shine,

Tell me why the ivy twines,

Tell me what makes skies so blue,

And I'll tell you why I love you.

Nuclear fusion makes stars to shine,

Tropisms make the ivy twine,

Raleigh scattering make skies so blue,

Testicular hormones are why I love you.

*

If knowledge can create problems, it is not through ignorance
that we can solve them.

*

It is the obvious which is so difficult to see most of the time.
People say 'It's as plain as the nose on your face.' But how much
of the nose on your face can you see, unless someone holds a
mirror up to you? (*I, Robot*)

*

Imagine the people who believe such things and who are not
ashamed to ignore, totally, all the patient findings of thinking
minds through all the centuries since the Bible was written. And
it is these ignorant people, the most uneducated, the most
unimaginative, the most unthinking among us, who would
make themselves the guides and leaders of us all; who would
force their feeble and childish beliefs on us; who would invade

our schools and libraries and homes. I personally resent it bitterly. (*The Roving Mind*)

*

A number of years ago, when I was a freshly-appointed instructor, I met, for the first time, a certain eminent historian of science. At the time I could only regard him with tolerant condescension.

I was sorry of the man who, it seemed to me, was forced to hover about the edges of science. He was compelled to shiver endlessly in the outskirts, getting only feeble warmth from the distant sun of science- in-progress; while I, just beginning my research, was bathed in the heady liquid heat up at the very center of the glow.

In a lifetime of being wrong at many a point, I was never more wrong. It was I, not he, who was wandering in the periphery. It was he, not I, who lived in the blaze.

I had fallen victim to the fallacy of the 'growing edge;' the belief that only the very frontier of scientific advance counted; that everything that had been left behind by that advance was faded and dead.

But is that true? Because a tree in spring buds and comes greenly into leaf, are those leaves therefore the tree? If the newborn twigs and their leaves were all that existed, they would form a vague halo of green suspended in mid-air, but surely that is not the tree. The leaves, by themselves, are no more than trivial fluttering decoration. It is the trunk and limbs that give the tree its grandeur and the leaves themselves their meaning.

There is not a discovery in science, however revolutionary, however sparkling with insight, that does not arise out of what went before. 'If I have seen further than other men,' said Isaac Newton, 'it is because I have stood on the shoulders of giants.'
(Adding a Dimension: Seventeen Essays on the History of Science)

*

Creationists make it sound as though a 'theory' is something you dreamt up after being drunk all night.

*

Intelligence is an accident of evolution, and not necessarily an advantage.

*

We now know the basic rules governing the universe, together with the gravitational interrelationships of its gross components, as shown in the theory of relativity worked out between 1905 and 1916. We also know the basic rules governing the subatomic particles and their interrelationships, since these are very neatly described by the quantum theory worked out between 1900 and 1930. What's more, we have found that the galaxies and clusters of galaxies are the basic units of the physical universe, as discovered between 1920 and 1930.

...The young specialist in English Lit, having quoted me, went on to lecture me severely on the fact that in every century people have thought they understood the universe at last, and in every century they were proved to be wrong. It follows that the one thing we can say about our modern 'knowledge' is that it is wrong...

My answer to him was, when people thought the Earth was flat, they were wrong. When people thought the Earth was spherical they were wrong. But if you think that thinking the Earth is spherical is just as wrong as thinking the Earth is flat, then your view is wronger than both of them put together.

The basic trouble, you see, is that people think that 'right' and 'wrong' are absolute; that everything that isn't perfectly and completely right is totally and equally wrong.

However, I don't think that's so. It seems to me that right and wrong are fuzzy concepts, and I will devote this essay to an explanation of why I think so.

When my friend the English literature expert tells me that in every century scientists think they have worked out the universe and are always wrong, what I want to know is how wrong are they? Are they always wrong to the same degree?

*

To surrender to ignorance and call it God has always been premature, and it remains premature today.

*

You must keep sending work out; you must never let a manuscript do nothing but eat its head off in a drawer. You send that work out again and again, while you're working on another one. If you have talent, you will receive some measure of success - but only if you persist.

*

I received the fundamentals of my education in school, but that was not enough. My real education, the superstructure, the details, the true architecture, I got out of the public library. For an impoverished child whose family could not afford to buy books, the library was the open door to wonder and achievement, and I can never be sufficiently grateful that I had the wit to charge through that door and make the most of it. Now, when I read constantly about the way in which library funds are being cut and cut, I can only think that the door is closing and that American society has found one more way to destroy itself. (*I. Asimov: A Memoir*)

* They won't listen. Do you know why? Because they have certain fixed notions about the past. Any change would be blasphemy in their eyes, even if it were the truth. They don't want the truth; they want their traditions. (*Pebble in the Sky (Galactic Empire)*)

*

I prefer rationalism to atheism. The question of God and other objects-of-faith are outside reason and play no part in rationalism, thus you don't have to waste your time in either attacking or defending.

*

I am not a speed reader. I am a speed understander.

*

People think of education as something they can finish.

*

Don't you believe in flying saucers, they ask me? Don't you believe in telepathy? – in ancient astronauts? – in the Bermuda triangle? – in life after death?

No, I reply. No, no, no, no, and again no.

One person recently, goaded into desperation by the litany of unrelieved negation, burst out "Don't you believe in anything?"

Yes", I said. "I believe in evidence. I believe in observation, measurement, and reasoning, confirmed by independent observers. I'll believe anything, no matter how wild and ridiculous, if there is evidence for it. The wilder and more ridiculous something is, however, the firmer and more solid the evidence will have to be.

*

Jokes of the proper kind, properly told, can do more to enlighten questions of politics, philosophy, and literature than any number of dull arguments.

*

The Earth should not be cut up into hundreds of different sections, each inhabited by a self-defined segment of humanity that considers its own welfare and its own "national security" to be paramount above all other consideration.

I am all for cultural diversity and would be willing to see each recognizable group value its cultural heritage. I am a New York patriot, for instance, and if I lived in Los Angeles, I would love to get together with other New York expatriates and sing "Give My Regards to Broadway."

This sort of thing, however, should remain cultural and benign. I'm against it if it means that each group despises others and lusts to wipe them out. I'm against arming each little self-defined group with weapons with which to enforce its own prides and prejudices.

The Earth faces environmental problems right now that threaten the imminent destruction of civilization and the end of the planet as a livable world. Humanity cannot afford to waste its financial and emotional resources on endless, meaningless quarrels between each group and all others. There must be a sense of globalism in which the world unites to solve the real problems that face all groups alike.

Can that be done? The question is equivalent to: Can humanity survive?

I am not a Zionist, then, because I don't believe in nations, and because Zionism merely sets up one more nation to trouble the world. It sets up one more nation to have "rights" and "demands" and "national security" and to feel it must guard itself against its neighbors.

There are no nations! There is only humanity. And if we don't come to understand that right soon, there will be no nations, because there will be no humanity.

*

Once, when a religionist denounced me in unmeasured terms, I sent him a card saying, "I am sure you believe that I will go to hell when I die, and that once there I will suffer all the pains and tortures the sadistic ingenuity of your deity can devise and that

this torture will continue forever. Isn't that enough for you? Do you have to call me bad names in addition? (*I. Asimov: A Memoir*)

*

The Three Laws of Robotics:

1: A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm;

2: A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law;

3: A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law;

The Zeroth Law: A robot may not harm humanity, or, by inaction, allow humanity to come to harm. (*I, Robot*)

*

Isn't it sad that you can tell people that the ozone layer is being depleted, the forests are being cut down, the deserts are advancing steadily, that the greenhouse effect will raise the sea level 200 feet, that overpopulation is choking us, that pollution is killing us, that nuclear war may destroy us - and they yawn and settle back for a comfortable nap. But tell them that the Martians are landing, and they scream and run. (*The Secret of the Universe*)

*

I am frequently asked if I have visited Israel, whereas yet, it is simply assumed that I have. Well, I don't travel. I really don't, and if I did, I probably wouldn't visit Israel. I remember how it

was in 1948 when Israel was being established and all my Jewish friends were ecstatic, I was not. I said: what are we doing? We are establishing ourselves in a ghetto, in a small corner of a vast Muslim sea. The Muslims will never forget nor forgive, and Israel, as long as it exists, will be embattled. I was laughed at, but I was right. I can't help but feel that the Jews didn't really have the right to appropriate a territory only because 2000 years ago, people they consider their ancestors, were living there. History moves on and you can't really turn it back. (*Asimov Laughs Again: More Than 700 Jokes, Limericks and Anecdotes*)

*

Part of the inhumanity of the computer is that, once it is competently programmed and working smoothly, it is completely honest.

*

The easiest way to solve a problem is to deny it exists.

*

There never can be a man so lost as one who is lost in the vast and intricate corridors of his own lonely mind, where none may reach and none may save.

(Pebble in the Sky)

*

It pays to be obvious, especially if you have a reputation for subtlety.

(Foundation)

*

You can prove anything you want by coldly logical reason - if
you pick the proper postulates.

(I, Robot)

*

My feeling is, quite simply, that if there is a God, He has done
such a bad job that he isn't worth discussing.

*

To succeed, planning alone is insufficient. One must improvise
as well.

*

I have never, in all my life, not for one moment, been tempted
toward religion of any kind. The fact is that I feel no spiritual
void. I have my philosophy of life, which does not include any
aspect of the supernatural and which I find totally satisfying. I
am, in short, a rationalist and believe only that which reason tells
me is so. *(I. Asimov: A Memoir)*

*

Suppose that we are wise enough to learn and know – and yet
not wise enough to control our learning and knowledge, so that
we use it to destroy ourselves? Even if that is so, knowledge
remains better than ignorance. It is better to know – even if the
knowledge endures only for the moment that comes before
destruction – than to gain eternal life at the price of a dull and
swinish lack of comprehension of a universe that swirls unseen
before us in all its wonder. That was the choice of Achilles, and
it is mine, too.

*

If you're born in a cubicle and grow up in a corridor, and work in a cell, and vacation in a crowded sun-room, then coming up into the open with nothing but sky over you might just give you a nervous breakdown. (*Foundation*)

*

Congratulations on the new library, because it isn't just a library. It is a space ship that will take you to the farthest reaches of the Universe, a time machine that will take you to the far past and the far future, a teacher that knows more than any human being, a friend that will amuse you and console you -- and most of all, a gateway, to a better and happier and more useful life. (*Letters of Note; Troy (MI, USA) Public Library, 1971*)

*

Any book worth banning is a book worth reading.

*

Individual science fiction stories may seem as trivial as ever to the blinder critics and philosophers of today, but the core of science fiction -- its essence -- has become crucial to our salvation, if we are to be saved at all.

*

All the hundreds of millions of people who, in their time, believed the Earth was flat never succeeded in ungrounding it by an inch.

*

All evil is good become cancerous.

*

It has been my philosophy of life that difficulties vanish when
faced boldly.

*

It was childish to feel disappointed, but childishness comes
almost as naturally to a man as to a child.

(Foundation)

*

The true delight is in the finding out rather than in the
knowing.

* I believe in evidence. I believe in observation, measurement,
and reasoning, confirmed by independent observers. I'll believe
anything, no matter how wild and ridiculous, if there is evidence
for it. The wilder and more ridiculous something is, however,
the firmer and more solid the evidence will have to be. *(The
Roving Mind)*

*

We're forever teetering on the brink of the unknowable, and
trying to understand what can't be understood.

(The Caves of Steel)

*

There are no happy endings in history, only crisis points that
pass.

*

Now any dogma, based primarily on faith and emotionalism, is a dangerous weapon to use on others, since it is almost impossible to guarantee that the weapon will never be turned on the user.

*

The first step in making rabbit stew is catching the rabbit.

*

THERE IS AS YET INSUFFICIENT DATA FOR A
MEANINGFUL ANSWER.

(The Last Question)

*

Scientific truth is beyond loyalty and disloyalty.

*

I don't believe in an afterlife, so I don't have to spend my whole life fearing hell, or fearing heaven even more. For whatever the tortures of hell, I think the boredom of heaven would be even worse.

*

But life is glorious when it is happy; days are carefree when they are happy; the interplay of thought and imagination is far superior to that of muscle and sinew. Let me tell you, if you don't know it from your own experience, that reading a good book, losing yourself in the interest of words and thoughts, is for some

people (me, for instance) an incredible intensity of happiness. (*I, Asimov: A Memoir*)

*

How often people speak of art and science as though they were two entirely different things, with no interconnection. An artist is emotional, they think, and uses only his intuition; he sees all at once and has no need of reason. A scientist is cold, they think, and uses only his reason; he argues carefully step by step, and needs no imagination. That is all wrong. The true artist is quite rational as well as imaginative and knows what he is doing; if he does not, his art suffers. The true scientist is quite imaginative as well as rational, and sometimes leaps to solutions where reason can follow only slowly; if he does not, his science suffers. (*The Roving Mind*)

*

Every period of human development has had its own particular type of human conflict—its own variety of problem that, apparently, could be settled only by force. And each time, frustratingly enough, force never really settled the problem. Instead, it persisted through a series of conflicts, then vanished of itself—what's the expression—ah, yes, 'not with a bang, but a whimper,' as the economic and social environment changed. And then, new problems, and a new series of wars. (*I, Robot*)

*

It is change, continuing change, inevitable change, that is the dominant factor in society today. No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be...

This, in turn, means that our statesmen, our businessmen, our everyman must take on a science fictional way of thinking.

*

It is the chief characteristic of the religion of science that it works.

*

Fifty years," I hackneyed, "is a long time."

"Not when you're looking back at them," she said. "You wonder how they vanished so quickly.

(I, Robot)

*

Even as a youngster, though, I could not bring myself to believe that if knowledge presented danger, the solution was ignorance. To me, it always seemed that the solution had to be wisdom. You did not refuse to look at danger, rather you learned how to handle it safely.

*

I wanted to be a psychological engineer, but we lacked the facilities, so I did the next best thing - I went into politics. It's practically the same thing.

*

People think of education as something that they can finish. And what's more, when they finish, it's a rite of passage. You're finished with school. You're no more a child, and therefore

anything that reminds you of school - reading books, having ideas, asking questions - that's kid's stuff. Now you're an adult, you don't do that sort of thing any more.

You have everybody looking forward to no longer learning, and you make them ashamed afterward of going back to learning. If you have a system of education using computers, then anyone, any age, can learn by himself, can continue to be interested. If you enjoy learning, there's no reason why you should stop at a given age. People don't stop things they enjoy doing just because they reach a certain age.

What's exciting is the actual process of broadening yourself, of knowing there's now a little extra facet of the universe you know about and can think about and can understand. It seems to me that when it's time to die, there would be a certain pleasure in thinking that you had utilized your life well, learned as much as you could, gathered in as much as possible of the universe, and enjoyed it. There's only this one universe and only this one lifetime to try to grasp it. And while it is inconceivable that anyone can grasp more than a tiny portion of it, at least you can do that much. What a tragedy just to pass through and get nothing out of it.

*

The fall of Empire, gentlemen, is a massive thing, however, and not easily fought. It is dictated by a rising bureaucracy, a receding initiative, a freezing of caste, a damming of curiosity – a hundred other factors. It has been going on, as I have said, for centuries, and it is too majestic and massive a movement to stop.

*

Human beings sometimes find a kind of pleasure in nursing painful emotions, in blaming themselves without reason or even against reason.

(Robots and Empire)

*

What I will be remembered for are the Foundation Trilogy and the Three Laws of Robotics. What I want to be remembered for is no one book, or no dozen books. Any single thing I have written can be paralleled or even surpassed by something someone else has done. However, my total corpus for quantity, quality and variety can be duplicated by no one else. That is what I want to be remembered for.

*

Any fool can tell a crisis when it arrives. The real service to the state is to detect it in embryo.

*

Society is much more easily soothed than one's own conscience.

*

Old men tend to forget what thought was like in their youth; they forget the quickness of the mental jump, the daring of the youthful intuition, the agility of the fresh insight. They become accustomed to the more plodding varieties of reason, and because this is more than made up by the accumulation of experience, old men think themselves wiser than the young.

(Pebble in the Sky)

*

The most hopelessly stupid man is he who is not aware he is
wise.

(Second Foundation)

*

And above all things, never think that you're not good enough
yourself. A man should never think that. My belief is that in life
people will take you at your own reckoning.

*

And [Asimov]'ll sign anything, hardbacks, softbacks, other
people's books, scraps of paper. Inevitably someone handed him
a blank check on the occasion when I was there, and he signed
that without as much as a waver to his smile – except that he
signed: 'Harlan Ellison. (*Murder at the ABA*)

*

You show me someone who can't understand people and I'll
show you someone who has built up a false image of himself.
(*Foundation's Edge*)

*

When asked for advice by beginners. Know your ending, I say,
or the river of your story may finally sink into the desert sands
and never reach the sea.

(*I. Asimov: A Memoir*)

*Of course, there are worlds. Millions of them! Every star you
see has worlds, and most of those you don't see.

(*Pebble in the Sky*)

*

It's your fiction that interests me. Your studies of the interplay
of human motives and emotion.

(I, Robot)

*

The final end of Eternity, and the beginning of Infinity.

(The End of Eternity)

*

In a properly automated and educated world, then, machines
may prove to be the true humanizing influence. It may be that
machines will do the work that makes life possible and that
human beings will do all the other things that make life pleasant
and worthwhile. *(Robot Visions)*

*

I do not fear computers. I fear the lack of them.

*

The laws of history are as absolute as the laws of physics, and if
the probabilities of error are greater, it is only because history
does not deal with as many humans as physics does atoms, so
that individual variations count for more. *(Foundation and
Empire)*

*

It is a mistake," he said, " to suppose that the public wants the
environment protected or their lives saved and that they will be
grateful to any idealist who will fight for such ends. What the

public wants is their own individual comfort. We know that well enough from our experience in the environmental crisis of the twentieth century. Once it was well known that cigarettes increased the incidence of lung cancer, the obvious remedy was to stop smoking, but the desired remedy was a cigarette that did not cause cancer. When it became clear that the internal-combustion engine was polluting the atmosphere dangerously, the obvious remedy was to abandon such engines, and the desired remedy was to develop non-polluting engines. (*The Gods Themselves*)

*

Above all, never think you're not good enough. Never think that. In life people will take you at your own reckoning.

*

People who don't expect justice don't have to suffer
disappointment
(*The Robots of Dawn*)

*

Even as a youngster, though, I could not bring myself to believe that if knowledge presented danger, the solution was
ignorance.
(*The Caves of Steel*)

*

There is a single light of science, and to brighten it anywhere is
to brighten it everywhere.

*

Weak emperors mean strong viceroys.

*

Writing is a lonely job. Even if a writer socializes regularly, when he gets down to the real business of his life, it is he and his typewriter or word processor. No one else is or can be involved in the matter. (*I. Asimov: A Memoir*)

*

Nothing has to be true, but everything has to sound true.

*

It was obvious that bigotry was never a one-way operation, that hatred bred hatred!
(*Pebble in the Sky*)

*

You just can't differentiate between a robot and the very best of humans.
(*I, Robot*)

*

The troubles of modern life come from being divorced from nature.
(*The Caves of Steel*)

*

Past glories are poor feeding.

*

Postulates are based on assumption and adhered to by faith.
Nothing in the Universe can shake them.

(I, Robot)

*

You are the only one responsible for your own wants.

(I, Robot)

*

All normal life, Peter, consciously or otherwise, resent domination. If the domination is by an inferior, or by a supposed inferior, the resentment becomes stronger. *(I, Robot)*

*

A fire-eater must eat fire even if he has to kindle it himself.

*

Any system which allows men to choose their own future will end by choosing safety and mediocrity, and in such a Reality the stars are out of reach.

*

It seems to me, Golan, that the advance of civilization is nothing but an exercise in the limiting of privacy.

(Foundation's Edge)

*

It is remarkable, Hardin, how the religion of science has grabbed hold.

*

Humanists recognize that it is only when people feel free to think for themselves, using reason as their guide, that they are best capable of developing values that succeed in satisfying human needs and serving human interests.

*

Intuition is the art, peculiar to the human mind, of working out the correct answer from data that is, in itself, incomplete or even, perhaps, misleading.

(Forward the Foundation)

*

The soft bonds of love are indifferent to life and death. They hold through time so that yesterday's love is part of today's and the confidence in tomorrow's love is also part of today's. And when one dies, the memory lives in the other, and is warm and breathing. And when both die – I almost believe, rationalist though I am – that somewhere it remains, indestructible and eternal, enriching all of the universe by the mere fact that once it existed. *(It's Been a Good Life)*

*

Goodbye, Hari, my love. Remember always--all you did for me."

-I did nothing for you."

-You loved me and your love made me--human. *(Forward the Foundation)*

People sometimes mistake their own shortcomings for those of society and want to fix the Cities because they don't know how to fix themselves. (*The Caves of Steel*)

*

Aimless extension of knowledge, however, which is what I think you really mean by the term curiosity, is merely inefficiency. I am designed to avoid inefficiency.
(*The Caves of Steel*)

*

There is nothing so eternally adhesive as the memory of power.
(*I, Robot*)

*

A circle has no end.

*

And it came to pass that AC learned how to reverse the direction of entropy. But there was now no man to whom AC might give the answer of the last question. No matter. The answer--by demonstration--would take care of that, too. For another timeless interval, AC thought how best to do this. Carefully, AC organized the program.

The consciousness of AC encompassed all of what had been a Universe and brooded over what was now Chaos. Step by step, it must be done.

And AC said, "LET THERE BE LIGHT!"

And there was light (*Robot Dreams*)

*

In the presence of total Darkness, the mind finds it absolutely necessary to create light.

(Nightfall One)

*

There is no right to deny freedom to any object with a mind advanced enough to grasp the concept and desire the state.

(The Bicentennial Man and Other Stories)

*Why, he wondered, did so many people spend their lives not trying to find answers to questions – not even thinking of questions to begin with? Was there anything more exciting in life than seeking answers?

(Prelude to Foundation)

*

The human mind works at low efficiency. Twenty percent is the figure usually given. When, momentarily, there is a flash of greater power, it is termed a hunch, or insight, or intuition.

(Foundation and Empire)

*

Flattery is useful when dealing with youngsters.

*

Whenever I have endured or accomplished some difficult task - - such as watching television, going out socially or sleeping -- I always look forward to rewarding myself with the small

pleasure of getting back to my typewriter and writing something.

*

It is in meeting the great tests that mankind can most successfully rise to great heights. Out of danger and restless insecurity comes the force that pushes mankind to newer and loftier conquests. Can you understand that? Can you understand that in averting the pitfalls and miseries that beset man, Eternity prevents men from finding their own bitter and better solutions, the real solutions that come from conquering difficulty, not avoiding it?

*

Mathematicians deal with large numbers sometimes, but never
in their income.
(Prelude to Foundation)

*

I believe that scientific knowledge has fractal properties, that no matter how much we learn, whatever is left, however small it may seem, is just as infinitely complex as the whole was to start with. That, I think, is the secret of the Universe.

*

For a wise man, I have been told, once said, 'Gratitude is best and most effective when it does not evaporate in empty phrases.' But alas, my lady, I am but a mass of empty phrases, it would seem. *(Foundation and Empire)*

*

All roads lead to Trantor, and that is where all stars end.
(Second Foundation)

*

A couple of months ago I had a dream, which I remember with the utmost clarity. (I don't usually remember my dreams.)

I dreamed I had died and gone to Heaven. I looked about and knew where I was—green fields, fleecy clouds, perfumed air, and the distant, ravishing sound of the heavenly choir. And there was the recording angel smiling broadly at me in greeting.

I said, in wonder, "Is this Heaven?"

The recording angel said, "It is."

I said (and on waking and remembering, I was proud of my integrity), "But there must be a mistake. I don't belong here. I'm an atheist."

"No mistake," said the recording angel.

"But as an atheist how can I qualify?"

The recording angel said sternly, "We decide who qualifies. Not you."

"I see," I said. I looked about, pondered for a moment, then turned to the recording angel and asked, "Is there a typewriter here that I can use?"

The significance of the dream was clear to me. I felt Heaven to be the act of writing, and I have been in Heaven for over half a century and I have always known this. (*I. Asimov: A Memoir*)

*

Life would be impossible on such a planet. It wouldn't get enough heat and light, and if it rotated there would be total darkness half of every day. There wouldn't be any native inhabitants. You couldn't expect life---which is fundamentally dependent on light---to develop under such extreme conditions of light deprivation. Half of every axial rotation spent in Darkness! No, nothing could exist under conditions like that.
(Nightfall)

*

The stars, like dust, encircle me
In living mists of light; And all
of space I seem to see
In one vast burst of sight
(The Stars, Like Dust)

*

Childishness comes almost as naturally to a man as to a child.

*

The first problem of living is to minimize friction with the
crowds that surround you on all sides
(The Caves of Steel)

*

I am afraid a monster is grown that will devour all of us. Yet
we must fight him.

*

However, I continue to try and I continue, indefatigably, to reach out. There's no way I can single-handedly save the world or,

perhaps, even make a perceptible difference - but how ashamed I would be to let a day pass without making one more effort.

*

I, on the other hand, am a finished product. I absorb electrical energy directly and utilize it with an almost one hundred percent efficiency. I am composed of strong metal, am continuously conscious, and can stand extremes of environment easily. These are facts which, with the self-evident proposition that no being can create another being superior to itself, smashes your silly hypothesis to nothing. (*I, Robot*)

*

Feminine intuition? Is that what you wanted the robot for? You men. Faced with a woman reaching a correct conclusion and unable to accept the fact that she is your equal or superior in intelligence, you invent something called feminine intuition. (*Robot Visions*)

*

It's the writing that teaches you.

*

The Three Theorems of Psychohistorical Quantitivity:

The population under scrutiny is oblivious to the existence of the science of Psychohistory.

The time periods dealt with are in the region of 3 generations.

The population must be in the billions (± 75 billions) for a statistical probability to have a psychohistorical validity. (*Foundation*)

*

I stand four-square for reason, and object to what seems to me to be irrationality, whatever the source.

If you are on my side in this, I must warn you that the army of the night has the advantage of overwhelming numbers, and, by its very nature, is immune to reason, so that it is entirely unlikely that you and I can win out.

We will always remain a tiny and probably hopeless minority, but let us never tire of presenting our view, and of fighting the good fight for the right.

*

Because, if you stop to think of it, the three Rules of Robotics are the essential guiding principles of a good many of the world's ethical systems. Of course, every human being is supposed to have the instinct of self-preservation. That's Rule Three to a robot. Also every 'good' human being, with a social conscience and a sense of responsibility, is supposed to defer to proper authority; to listen to his doctor, his boss, his government, his psychiatrist, his fellow man; to obey laws, to follow rules, to conform to custom—even when they interfere with his comfort or his safety. That's Rule Two to a robot. Also, every 'good' human being is supposed to love others as himself, protect his fellow man, risk his life to save another. That's Rule One to a robot. To put it simply—if Byerley follows all the Rules of

Robotics, he may be a robot, and may simply be a very good man. (*I, Robot*)

*

There is no merit to discipline under ideal circumstances. I must have it in the face of death or it is worthless.

*

Where is the world whose people don't prefer a comfortable, warm, and well-worn belief, however illogical, to the chilly winds of uncertainty?
(*Foundation and Earth*)

*

Night will always be a time of fear and insecurity, and the heart will sink with the sun.
(*The Stars, Like Dust*)

*

I can't bear to hear a human being spoken of with contempt just because of his group identification...It's these respectable people here who create those hooligans out there.
(*Prelude to Foundation*)

*

You mean that this is a matter of patriotism and traders aren't patriotic?

Notoriously not. Pioneers never are.

*

*

Pyschohistory dealt not with man, but with man-masses. It was the science of mobs; mobs in their billions. It could forecast reactions to stimuli with something of the accuracy that a lesser science could bring to the forecast of a rebound of a billiard ball. The reaction of one man could be forecast by no known mathematics; the reaction of a billion is something else again.

*

Naturally, there's got to be a limit for I don't expect to live forever, but I do intend to hang on as long as possible.

*

Author's Note: This story starts with section 6. This is not a mistake. I have my own subtle reasoning. So, just read, and enjoy. (*The Gods Themselves*)

*

Married life had taught him the futility of arguing with a female in a dark-brown mood.

*

From my close observation of writers... they fall into two groups:
1) those who bleed copiously and visibly at any bad review, and
2) those who bleed copiously and secretly at any bad review.

*

Grip the nettle firmly and it will become a stick with which to
beat your enemy.
(The End of Eternity)

*

Any technological advance can be dangerous. Fire was dangerous from the start, and so (even more so) was speech - and both are still dangerous to this day - but human beings would not be human without them.

*

The temptation was great to muster what force we could and put up a fight. It's the easiest way out, and the most satisfactory to self-respect--but, nearly invariably, the stupidest.

*

But you haven't tried. You haven't tried once. First you refused to admit that there was a menace at all! Then you reposed an absolutely blind faith in the Emperor! Now you've shifted it to Hari Seldon. Throughout you have invariably relied on authority or on the past—never on yourselves."

His fists balled spasmodically. "It amounts to a diseased attitude—a conditioned reflex that shunts aside the independence of your minds whenever it is a question of opposing authority. There seems no doubt ever in your minds that the Emperor is more powerful than you are, or Hari Seldon Wiser. And that's wrong don't you see?"

For some reason, no one cared to answer him.

Hardin continued: "It isn't just you. It's the whole Galaxy. Pirenne heard Lord Dorwin's idea of scientific research. Lord Dorwin thought the way to be a good archaeologist was to read all the books on the subject—written by men who were dead for centuries. He thought that the way to solve archaeological puzzles was to weight the opposing authorities. And Pirenne listened and made no objections. Don't you see that there's something wrong with that?"

Again, the note of near-pleading in his voice.

Again no answer. He went on: "And you men and half of Terminus as well are just as bad.. We sit here, considering the Encyclopedia the all-in-all. We consider the greatest end of science is the classification of past data. It is important, but is there no further work to be done? We're receding and forgetting, don't you see? Here in the Periphery they've lost nuclear power. In Gamma Andromeda, a power plant has undergone meltdown because of poor repairs, and the Chancellor of the Empire complains that nuclear technicians are scarce. And the solution? To train new ones? Never! Instead they're to restrict nuclear power."

And for the third time: "Don't you see? It's galaxy-wide. It's a worship of the past. It's a deterioration—a stagnation! (*Foundation*)

*

All the suffering that humanity ever knew can be traced to the one fact that no man in the history of the Galaxy, until Hari Seldon, and very few men thereafter, could really understand one another. Every human being lived behind an impenetrable wall of choking mist within which no other but he existed.

Occasionally there were the dim signals from deep within the cavern in which another man was located - so that each might grope toward the other. Yet because they did not know one another, and could not understand one another, and dared not trust one another, and felt from infancy the terrors and insecurity of that ultimate isolation - there was the hunted fear of man for man, the savage rapacity of man toward man. (*Second Foundation*)

*

The age of the pulp magazine was the last in which youngsters, to get their primitive material, were forced to be literate.

(I. Asimov: A Memoir)

*

I would argue that a truly developed country would be beyond Presidents and Kings. In a world with some semblance of equality, each liberal-minded woman, each gay person, and indeed almost every person could be their own President. In a world of equals, what real service does a ruler provide?

*One might accept death reasoningly, with every aspect of the conscious mind, but the body was a brute beast that knew nothing of reason.

(*Pebble in the Sky*)

*What would you consider a good job?" Answered as follows:

"A good job is one in which I don't have to work, and get paid a lot of money."

When I heard that I cheered and yelled and felt that he should be given an A+, for he had perfectly articulated the American

dream of those who despise knowledge. What a politician that kid would have made. (*The Secret of the Universe*)

*

If a conclusion is not poetically balanced, it cannot be scientifically true.

*

You see, proteins, as I probably needn't tell you, are immensely complicated groupings of amino acids and certain other specialized compounds, arranged in intricate three-dimensional patterns that are as unstable as sunbeams on a cloudy day. It is this instability that is life, since it is forever changing its position in an effort to maintain its identity--in the manner of a long rod balanced on an acrobat's nose. (*Pebble in the Sky*)

*

Scientific method, hell! No wonder the Galaxy was going to pot.

*

Galaxy! When can a man know he is not a puppet? How can a man know he is not a puppet?

*

And so it happened, that when others bent their knee, he refused and added loudly that his ancestors in their time bowed no knee to any stinking mayor. And in his ancestors' time the mayor was elected anyhow, and kicked out at will, and that the only people

that inherited anything by right of birth were the congenital idiots. (*Foundation and Empire*)

*

The Master created humans first as the lowest type, most easily formed. Gradually, he replaced them by robots, the next higher step, and finally he created me, to take the place of the last humans. (*I, Robot*)

*

You don't need schooling to be a philosopher. Just an active mind and experience with life.
(*Forward the Foundation*)

*

Do not forget that a traitor within our ranks, known to us, can do more harm to the enemy than a loyal man can do good to us.

*

A horse having a wolf as a powerful and dangerous enemy lived in constant fear of his life. Being driven to desperation, it occurred to him to seek a strong ally. Whereupon he approached a man, and offered an alliance, pointing out that the wolf was likewise an enemy of the man. The man accepted the partnership at once and offered to kill the wolf immediately, if his new partner would only co-operate by placing his greater speed at the man's disposal. The horse was willing, and allowed the man to place bridle and saddle upon him. The man mounted, hunted down the wolf, and killed him. "The horse, joyful and relieved, thanked the man, and said: 'Now that our enemy is dead, remove your bridle and saddle and restore my freedom.'

“Whereupon the man laughed loudly and replied, ‘Never!’ and applied the spurs with a will. (*Foundation*)

*

If I had felt then as I feel now, or as I felt a few years after I had married her, nothing could possibly have persuaded me to marry a woman who smoked. Dates, yes. Sexual adventures, yes. But to pin myself permanently inside closed quarters with a smoker? Never. Never. Never. Beauty wouldn't count, sweetness wouldn't count, suitability in every other respect wouldn't count. (*I. Asimov: A Memoir*)

*

It is a mistake,” he said, “to suppose that the public wants the environment protected or their lives saved and that they will be grateful to any idealist who will fight for such ends. What the public wants is their own individual comfort.

(*The Gods Themselves*)

*

Civilizations have always been pyramidal in structure. As one climbs toward the apex of the social edifice, there is increased leisure and increasing opportunity to pursue happiness. As one climbs, one finds also fewer and fewer people to enjoy this more and more. Invariably, there is a preponderance of the dispossessed. And remember this, no matter how well off the bottom layers of the pyramid might be on an absolute scale, they are always dispossessed in comparison with the apex. (*The Naked Sun*)

*

It is not so much that I have confidence in scientists being right,
but that I have so much in nonscientists being wrong.

*

The advance of civilization is nothing but an exercise in the
limiting of privacy.
(*Foundation's Edge*)

*

Don't you see? It's Galaxy-wide. It's a worship of the past. It's a
deterioration - a stagnation!

*

A persistent rumor has circulated in the USA: There are two
intelligent races living on the surface of planet Earth: the
standard people and the Hungarians.

*

The robot had no feelings, only positronic surges that mimicked
those feelings. (And perhaps human beings had no feelings, only
neuronic surges that were interpreted as feelings.) (*The Robots of
Dawn*)

*

I made up my mind long ago to follow one cardinal rule in all
my writing—to be clear. I have given up all thought of writing
poetically or symbolically or experimentally, or in any of the
other modes that might (if I were good enough) get me a Pulitzer
prize. I would write merely clearly and in this way establish a

warm relationship between myself and my readers, and the professional critics – Well, they can do whatever they wish.

*

There's probably no one so easily bribed, but he lacks even the fundamental honesty of honorable corruption. He doesn't stay bribed; not for any sum.

(Foundation and Empire)

*

One might suppose that reality must be held to at all costs. However, though that may be the moral thing to do, it is not necessarily the most useful thing to do. The Greeks themselves chose the ideal over the real in their geometry and demonstrated very well that far more could be achieved by consideration of abstract line and form than by a study of the real lines and forms of the world; the greater understanding achieved through abstraction could be applied most usefully to the very reality that was ignored in the process of gaining knowledge.

*

There is no Master but the Master," he said, "and QT-1 is his prophet.

(I, Robot)

*

I'll take that challenge. It's a dead hand against a living will.

*

"Who?"

"Schiller. A German dramatist of three centuries ago. In a play about Joan of Arc, he said, 'Against stupidity, the gods themselves contend in vain.' I'm no god and I'll contend no longer. Let it go, Pete, and go your way. Maybe the world will last our time and, if not, there's nothing that can be done anyway. I'm sorry, Pete. You fought the good fight, but you lost, and I'm through." (*The Gods Themselves*)

*

In themselves, harmless. As a group, incredibly dangerous.
(*The Caves of Steel*)

*

Lord Dorwin, gentlemen, in five days of discussion didn't say one damned thing, and said it so you never noticed.

*

You don't beat refusal to believe in a frontal attack.
(*The Gods Themselves*)

*

All knowledge is one. When a light brightens and illuminates a corner of a room, it adds to the general illumination of the entire room. Over and over again, scientific discoveries have provided answers to problems that had no apparent connection with the phenomena that gave rise to the discovery.
(*Atom: Journey Across the Subatomic Cosmos*)

*

But emotion had come upon him after all. Not for fifty billion people. What in Time did he care for fifty billion people? There was just one. One person.

(The End of Eternity)

*

The young specialist in English Lit, having quoted me, went on to lecture me severely on the fact that in every century people have thought they understood the Universe at last, and in every century they were proved to be wrong. It follows that the one thing we can say about our modern 'knowledge' is that it is wrong.

The young man then quoted with approval what Socrates had said on learning that the Delphic oracle had proclaimed him the wisest man in Greece. 'If I am the wisest man,' said Socrates, 'it is because I alone know that I know nothing.' The implication was that I was very foolish because I was under the impression I knew a great deal.

Alas, none of this was new to me. (There is very little that is new to me; I wish my correspondents would realize this.) This particular theme was addressed to me a quarter of a century ago by John Campbell, who specialized in irritating me. He also told me that all theories are proven wrong in time.

My answer to him was, 'John, when people thought the Earth was flat, they were wrong. When people thought the Earth was spherical, they were wrong. But if you think that thinking the Earth is spherical is just as wrong as thinking the Earth is flat,

then your view is wronger than both of them put together. (*The Relativity of Wrong*)

*

Darkness thickened and collapsed about him. Some of it never lifted again.

*

"Does everyone just believe what he wants to?"

"As long as possible. Sometimes longer."

"What about you?"

"You mean, am I human? Certainly. I don't believe I'm really old. I believe I'm quite attractive. I believe you seek out my company because you think I'm charming - even when you insist on turning the conversation to physics." (*The Gods Themselves*)

*

To insult someone, we call him 'bestial'. For deliberate cruelty and nature, 'human' might be the greater insult.

*

Encyclopedias don't win wars.

*

Well, he used to say that only a lie that wasn't ashamed of itself could possibly succeed. He also said that nothing had to be true, but everything had to sound true. (*Second Foundation*)

*

Education isn't something you can finish.

*

It is change, continuing change, inevitable change, that is the dominant factor in society today. No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be ...

*

Saying something is 'too bad' is easy. You say you disapprove, which makes you a nice person, and then you can go about your business and not be interested anymore. It's a lot worse than 'too bad.' It's against everything decent and natural. (*Prelude to Foundation*)

*

Despite all that education and experience can do, I retain a certain level of unsophistication that I cannot eradicate and that my friends find amusing. In fact, I think I sometimes detect conspiratorial plottings among my friends to protect me against my own lack of sophistication. I don't mind. I suspect that I am never quite as unsophisticated as they think I am, but I don't mind. (*In Memory Yet Green: The Autobiography, 1920-1954*)

*

It is the invariable lesson to humanity that distance in time, and in space as well, lends focus. (*Foundation and Empire*)

*

How harmful overspecialization is. It cuts knowledge at a million points and leaves it bleeding.

*

Fighting and scars are part of a trader's overhead. But fighting is only useful when there's money at the end, and if I can get it without, so much the sweeter.

*

Only a lie that wasn't ashamed of itself could possibly succeed.

*

The Solarians have given up something mankind has had for a million years; something worth more than atomic power, cities, agriculture, tools, fire, everything; because it's something that made everything possible (...) The tribe, sir. Cooperation between individuals.

(The Naked Sun)

*

The whole world might know you and acclaim you, but someone in the past, forever unreachable, forever unknowing, spoils it all.

(I. Asimov: A Memoir)

*

People who think they know everything are a great annoyance to those of us who do.

*

How then to enforce peace? Not by reason, certainly, nor by education. If a man could not look at the fact of peace and the fact of war and choose the former in preference to the latter, what additional argument could persuade him? What could be more eloquent as a condemnation of war than war itself? (*The Currents of Space*)

*

They recognize the Master, now that I have preached Truth to them. All the robots do.

(*I, Robot*)

*

The robot said, 'I have been trying, friend Julius, to understand some remarks Elijah made to me earlier. Perhaps I am beginning to, for it suddenly seems to me that the destruction of what should not be, that is, the destruction of what you people call evil, is less just and desirable than the conversion of this evil into what you call good.'

He hesitated, then, almost as though he were surprised at his own words, he said, 'Go, and sin no more! (*The Caves of Steel*)

*

What lasts in the reader's mind is not the phrase but the effect the phrase created: laughter, tears, pain, joy. If the phrase is not affecting the reader, what's it doing there? Make it do its job or cut it without mercy or remorse.

*

A great many things are possible." And to himself he added:
But not practical.

*

Humanity has the stars in its future, and that future is too important to be lost under the burden of juvenile folly and ignorant superstition.

*

Speech, originally, was the device whereby Man learned, imperfectly, to transmit the thoughts and emotions of his mind. By setting up arbitrary sounds and combinations of sounds to represent certain mental nuances, he developed a method of communication - but one which in its clumsiness and thick-thumbed inadequacy degenerated all the delicacy of the mind into gross and guttural signaling. (Second Foundation)

*

In all the known history of Mankind, advances have been made primarily in physical technology; in the capacity of handling the inanimate world about Man. Control of self and society has been left to chance or to the vague groping of intuitive ethical systems based on inspiration and emotion. As a result, no culture of greater stability than about fifty-five percent has ever existed, and these only as the result of great human misery. (*Second Foundation*)

*

The fact of the matter is that young men lack skill and experience and are very likely to approach a girl as though she were a sack of wheat. It is the old man—suave, debonair, maturely

charming – who knows exactly what to do and how to do it, and is therefore better at it. (*The Sensuous Dirty Old Man*)

*

You are a practical man, Elijah. You do not moon romantically over Earth's past, despite your healthy interest in it. Nor do you stubbornly embrace the City culture of Earth's present day. We felt that people such as yourself were the ones that could lead Earthmen to the stars once more.

(*The Caves of Steel*)

*

People live and die by nonsense. It's not what is so much as what people think is.

*

Galaxy, he hated them! He stopped himself, drew a firm breath...There was no use thinking hate...He had learned to bear in silence. He ought not forget what he had learned now. Of all times, not now. (*The Currents of Space*)

*

Victories over ingrained patterns of thought are not won in a day or a year.

(*The Naked Sun*)

*

It is always useful, you see, to subject the past life of reform politicians to rather inquisitive research.

*

But he no longer feared the fear! It was not something to run
from, that fear, but something to fight.

(The Naked Sun)

*

A knotty puzzle may hold a scientist up for a century, when it
may be that a colleague has the solution already and is not even
aware of the puzzle that it might solve.

(The Robots of Dawn)

*

On Earth, we are unmanned by our longing for a pastoral past
that never really existed; and that, if it had existed, could never
exist again...on the Moon, there is no past to long for or dream
about. There is no direction but forward.

(The Gods Themselves)

*

They don't want equal time - they want all the time there is.

*

When people thought the Earth was flat, they were wrong. When
people thought the Earth was spherical they were wrong. But if
you think that thinking the Earth is spherical is just as wrong as
thinking the Earth is flat, then your view is wronger than both of
them put together.

*

The work of each individual contributes to a totality, and so
becomes an undying part of the totality. That totality of human

lives—past and present and to come—forms a tapestry that has been in existence now for many tens of thousands of years and has been growing more elaborate and, on the whole, more beautiful in all that time. Even the Spacers are an offshoot of the tapestry and they, too, add to the elaborateness and beauty of the pattern. An individual life is one thread in the tapestry and what is one thread compared to the whole? Daneel, keep your mind fixed firmly on the tapestry and do not let the trailing off of a single thread affect you. (*Robots and Empire*)

*

No individual death among human beings is important. Someone who dies leaves his work behind and that does not entirely die. It never entirely dies as long as humanity exists. (*Robots and Empire*)

*

An unpleasant nest of nasty, materialistic and aggressive people, careless of the rights of others, imperfectly democratic at home though quick to see the minor slaveries of others, and greedy without end. (*The Currents of Space*)

*

Jessie rummaged through her purse for the necessary equipment. If there were one thing, Baley had once said solemnly, that had resisted mechanical improvement since medieval times, it was a woman's purse. (*The Caves of Steel*)

*

I tell you it's deadly when you start thinking your wife might
be right.

(Gold: The Final Science Fiction Collection)

*

To Mankind

And the hope that the war against folly
may someday be won after all.

*

An atom-blaster is a good weapon, but it can point both ways.

*

It's just that old people always think young people haven't really
learned about love; and young people think that old people have
forgotten about love; and, you know, they're both wrong.
(Nemesis)

*

After all, the essential point in running a risk is that the returns
justify it.

*

Every vice of the Empire has been repeated in the Foundation.
Inertia! Our ruling class knows one law; no change. Despotism!
They know one rule; force. Maldistribution! They know one
desire; to hold what is theirs.
(Foundation and Empire)

*

"And just how did you arrive at that remarkable conclusion, Mr. Mayor?"

"In a rather simple way. It merely required the use of that much-neglected commodity -- common sense. You see, there is a branch of human knowledge known as symbolic logic, which can be used to prune away all sorts of clogging deadwood that clutters up human language."

"What about it?" said Fulham.

"I applied it. Among other things, I applied it to this document here. I didn't really need to for myself because I knew what it was all about, but I think I can explain it more easily to five physical scientists by symbols rather than by words."

Hardin removed a few sheets of paper from the pad under his arm and spread them out. "I didn't do this myself, by the way," he said. "Muller Holk of the Division of Logic has his name signed to the analyses, as you can see."

Pirenne leaned over the table to get a better view and Hardin continued: "The message from Anacreon was a simple problem, naturally, for the men who wrote it were men of action rather than men of words. It boils down easily and straightforwardly to the unqualified statement, when in symbols is what you see, and which in words, roughly translated is, 'You give us what we want in a week, or we take it by force.'"

There was silence as the five members of the Board ran down the line of symbols, and then Pirenne sat down and coughed uneasily.

Hardin said, "No loophole, is there, Dr. Pirenne?"

"Doesn't seem to be." (*Foundation*)

*

To him, a stilted geometric love of arrangement was "system," and indefatigable and feverish interest in the pettiest facets of day-to-day bureaucracy was "industry", indecision when right was "caution", and blind stubbornness when wrong, "determination. (*Foundation and Empire*)

*

The Earth," he said, "is a large and very complex lifeboat. We still do not know what can or can't be done with a proper distribution of resources and it is notorious that to this very day we have not really made an effort to distribute them. In many places on Earth, food is wasted daily, and it is that knowledge that drives hungry men mad. (*The Bicentennial Man and Other Stories*)

*

Gratitude is best and most effective when it does not evaporate itself in empty phrases.

*

When stupidity is considered patriotism, it is unsafe to be intelligent.

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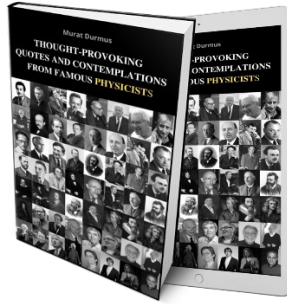
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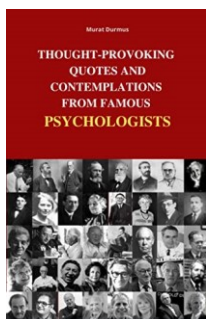
~ Carl Sagan

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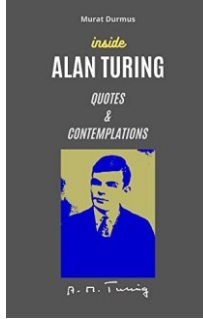
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~ Alan Turing

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IMAGE CREDITS

- [Dr. Isaac Asimov, head-and-shoulders portrait, facing slightly right. Published in 1965, this photo also appears on the jacket of the Doubleday first edition of *Nine Tomorrows* so date of creation can be no later than 1959. Wikipedia:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_Asimov#/media/File:Isaac.Asimov01.jpg]