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Quotes by Burgess, Anthony

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Anthony Burgess (February 25, 1917 - November 22, 1993) was an English novelist and critic. He was also active as a composer, librettist, poet, playwright, screenwriter, journalist, essayist, travel writer, broadcaster, translator and educationalist. Born John Burgess Wilson in Manchester, England, he lived and worked variously in Southeast Asia, the United States and Mediterranean Europe. His fiction includes the Malayan trilogy (The Long Day Wanes) on the dying days of Britain's empire in the East, the Enderby cycle of comic novels about a reclusive poet and his muse, the classic speculative recreation of Shakespeare's love-life Nothing Like the Sun, the cult exploration of the nature of evil A Clockwork Orange, and Earthly Powers, a panoramic Tolstoyan saga of the 20th century. He wrote critical studies of Joyce, Hemingway, Shakespeare and Lawrence, produced the treatises on linguistics Language Made Plain and A Mouthful of Air, and turned out large quantities of journalism in several languages. The translator and adapter of Cyrano de Bergerac, Oedipus the King and Carmen for the stage, he scripted Jesus of Nazareth and Moses the Lawgiver for the screen and composed the Sinfoni Melayu, the Symphony (No. 3) in C and the opera Blooms of Dublin.

Violence among young people is an aspect of their desire to create. They don't know how to use their energy creatively so they do the opposite and destroy.

- Burgess, Anthony

If you write fiction you are, in a sense, corrupted. There's a tremendous corruptibility for the fiction writer because you're dealing mainly with sex and violence. These remain the basic themes, they're the basic themes of Shakespeare whether you like it or not.

- Burgess, Anthony

Novelists are perhaps the last people in the world to be entrusted with opinions. The nature of a novel is that it has no opinions, only the dialectic of contrary views, some of which, all of which, may be untenable and even silly. A novelist should not be too intelligent either, although he may be permitted to be an intellectual.

- Burgess, Anthony

Bath twice a day to be really clean, once a day to be passably clean, once a week to avoid being a public menace.

- Burgess, Anthony

The downtrodden, who are the great creators of slang.

- Burgess, Anthony

Art is dangerous. It is one of the attractions: when it ceases to be dangerous you don't want it.

- Burgess, Anthony

The aura of the theocratic death penalty for adultery still clings to America, even outside New England, and multiple divorce, which looks to the European like serial polygamy, is

the moral solution to the problem of the itch. Love comes into it too, of course, but in Europe we tend to see marital love as an eternity which encompasses hate and also indifference: when we promise to love we really mean that we promise to honor a contract. Americans, seeming to take marriage with not enough seriousness, are really taking love and sex with too much.

- Burgess, Anthony

We all need money, but there are degrees of desperation.

- Burgess, Anthony

Americans will listen, but they do not care to read. War and Peace must wait for the leisure of retirement, which never really comes: meanwhile it helps to furnish the living room. Blockbusting fiction is bought as furniture. Unread, it maintains its value. Read, it looks like money wasted. Cunningly, Americans know that books contain a person, and they want the person, not the book.

- Burgess, Anthony

All human life is here, but the Holy Ghost seems to be somewhere else.

- Burgess, Anthony

We are supposed to be the children of Seth; but Seth is too much of an effete nonentity to deserve ancestral regard. No, we are the sons of Cain, and with violence can be associated the attacks on sound, stone, wood and metal that produced civilization.

- Burgess, Anthony

The trouble began with Forster. After him it was considered ungentlemanly to write more than five or six novels.

- Burgess, Anthony

Een romanschrijver mag niet te intelligent zijn... maar misschien is het toegelaten dat hij een intellectueel is.

- Burgess, Anthony

Lezers in overvloed, denkers zijn zeldzaam.

- Burgess, Anthony

Het bezitten van een boek wordt een excuus om het te lezen.

- Burgess, Anthony

Schrijven is gedesinteresseerd worden. Er is een zekere afzwering in kunst.

- Burgess, Anthony

Geweld onder jongeren is een aspect van hun verlangen om te creëren. Ze weten niet hoe ze hun energie creatief kunnen aanwenden dus doen ze het tegenovergestelde en vernietigen ze.

- Burgess, Anthony



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