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Quotes by Mccarthy, Mary

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Mary Therese McCarthy (June 21, 1912 - October 25, 1989) was an American author and critic. She was politically active in left-wing politics for many years.

The American character looks always as if it had just had a rather bad haircut, which gives it, in our eyes at any rate, a greater humanity than the European, which even among its beggars has an all too professional air.

- Mccarthy, Mary

The Crucifixion and other historical precedents notwithstanding, many of us still believe that outstanding goodness is a kind of armor, that virtue, seen plain and bare, gives pause to criminality. But perhaps it is the other way around.

- Mccarthy, Mary

The labor of keeping house is labor in its most naked state, for labor is toil that never finishes, toil that has to be begun again the moment it is completed, toil that is destroyed and consumed by the life process.

- Mccarthy, Mary

Liberty, as it is conceived by current opinion, has nothing inherent about it; it is a sort of gift or trust bestowed on the individual by the state pending good behavior.

- Mccarthy, Mary

We all live in suspense from day to day; in other words, you are the hero of your own story.

- Mccarthy, Mary

The strongest argument for the un-materialistic character of American life is the fact that we tolerate conditions that are, from a negative point of view, intolerable. What the foreigner finds most objectionable in American life is its lack of basic comfort. No nation with any sense of material well-being would endure the food we eat, the cramped apartments we live in, the noise, the traffic, the crowded subways and buses. American life, in large cities, is a perpetual assault on the senses and the nerves; it is out of asceticism, out of unworldliness, precisely, that we bear it.

- Mccarthy, Mary

The happy ending is our national belief.

- Mccarthy, Mary

In politics, it seems, retreat is honorable if dictated by military considerations and shameful if even suggested for ethical reasons.

- Mccarthy, Mary

In verity we are the poor. This humanity we would claim for ourselves is the legacy, not only of the Enlightenment, but of the thousands and thousands of European peasants and

poor townspeople who came here bringing their humanity and their sufferings with them. It is the absence of a stable upper class that is responsible for much of the vulgarity of the American scene. Should we blush before the visitor for this deficiency?

- Mccarthy, Mary

Anti-Semitism is a horrible disease from which nobody is immune, and it has a kind of evil fascination that makes an enlightened person draw near the source of infection, supposedly in a scientific spirit, but really to sniff the vapors and dally with the possibility.

- Mccarthy, Mary

In science, all facts no matter how trivial, enjoy democratic equality.

- Mccarthy, Mary

Bureaucracy, the rule of no one, has become the modern form of despotism.

- Mccarthy, Mary

To care for the quarrels of the past, to identify oneself passionately with a cause that became, politically speaking, a losing cause with the birth of the modern world, is to experience a kind of straining against reality, a rebellious nonconformity that, again, is rare in America, where children are instructed in the virtues of the system they live under, as though history had achieved a happy ending in American civics.

- Mccarthy, Mary

It has to be acknowledged that in capitalist society, with its herds of hippies, originality has

become a sort of fringe benefit, a mere convention, accepted obsolescence, the Beatnik model being turned in for the Hippie model, as though strangely obedient to capitalist laws of marketing.

- Mccarthy, Mary

In violence we forget who we are.

- Mccarthy, Mary

Labor is work that leaves no trace behind it when it is finished, or if it does, as in the case of the tilled field, this product of human activity requires still more labor, incessant, tireless labor, to maintain its identity as a work of man.

- Mccarthy, Mary

The American, if he has a spark of national feeling, will be humiliated by the very prospect of a foreigner's visit to Congress -- these, for the most part, illiterate hacks whose fancy vests are spotted with gravy, and whose speeches, hypocritical, unctuous, and slovenly, are spotted also with the gravy of political patronage, these persons are a reflection on the democratic process rather than of it; they expose it in its process rather than of it; they expose it in its underwear.

- Mccarthy, Mary

A society person who is enthusiastic about modern painting or Truman Capote is already half a traitor to his class. It is middle-class people who, quite mistakenly, imagine that a lively pursuit of the latest in reading and painting will advance their status in the world.

- Mccarthy, Mary

Every age has a keyhole to which its eye is pasted.

- Mccarthy, Mary



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