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Quotes by Blanchot, Maurice

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Maurice Blanchot (September 27, 1907-February 20, 2003) was a French philosopher, literary theorist and writer of fiction. His influence on later post-structuralist theorists such as Jacques Derrida is difficult to overstate. It would be wrong to speak of Blanchot's work in terms of a coherent, all-encompassing 'theory', since it is a work founded on paradox and impossibility. If there is a thread running through all his writing, it is the constant engagement with the 'question of literature', a simultaneous enactment and interrogation of the profoundly strange experience of writing. For Blanchot, 'literature begins at the moment when literature becomes a question' (Literature and the Right to Death).

There is between sleep and us something like a pact, a treaty with no secret clauses, and according to this convention it is agreed that, far from being a dangerous, bewitching force, sleep will become domesticated and serve as an instrument of our power to act. We surrender to sleep, but in the way that the master entrusts himself to the slave who serves him.

- Blanchot, Maurice

A writer who writes, I am alone... can be considered rather comical. It is comical for a man to recognize his solitude by addressing a reader and by using methods that prevent the individual from being alone. The word alone is just as general as the word bread. To pronounce it is to summon to oneself the presence of everything the word excludes.

- Blanchot, Maurice

Lovers of painting and lovers of music are people who openly display their preference like a delectable ailment that isolates them and makes them proud.

- Blanchot, Maurice

A writer never reads his work. For him, it is the unreadable, a secret, and he cannot remain face to face with it. A secret, because he is separated from it.

- Blanchot, Maurice

To write is to make oneself the echo of what cannot cease speaking -- and since it cannot, in order to become its echo I have, in a way, to silence it. I bring to this incessant speech the decisiveness, the authority of my own silence.

- Blanchot, Maurice



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