

# Harold Bloom Quotes

*Reading, Thinking, Believe, Book, Writing, People, Self, Art, Doe, Literature,  
Past, Want, Enough, Goes On, Solitude, Real, Jesus, Order, Space, Failing*

Everyone wants a prodigy to fail; it makes our mediocrity more bearable.

~Harold Bloom

The most beautiful prose paragraph yet written by any American.

~Harold Bloom

We read, frequently if not unknowingly, in search of a mind more original than our own.

~Harold Bloom

I realized early on that the academy and the literary world alike

~Harold Bloom

It is hard to go on living without some hope of encountering the extraordinary.

~Harold Bloom

Shakespeare is the true multicultural author. He exists in all languages. He is put on the stage everywhere. Everyone feels that they are represented by him on the stage.

~Harold Bloom

At our present bad moment, we need above all to recover our sense of literary individuality and of poetic autonomy.

~Harold Bloom

Read deeply, not to believe, not to accept, not to contradict, but to learn to share in that one nature that writes and reads.

~Harold Bloom

Reading well is one of the greatest pleasures that solitude can afford you.

~Harold Bloom

The art and passion of reading well and deeply is waning, but [Jane] Austen still inspires people to become fanatical readers.

~Harold Bloom

A superb and dreadfully moving account of the glory and subsequent murder by the Romanians of the Jewish city in Odessa. . . . Odessa is both celebration and lament and equally impressive as both.

~Harold Bloom

I realized early on that the academy and the literary world alike - and I don't think there really is a distinction between the two - are always dominated by fools, knaves, charlatans and bureaucrats.

~Harold Bloom

Criticism starts - it has to start - with a real passion for reading. It can come in adolescence, even in your twenties, but you must fall in love with poems.

~Harold Bloom

I have never believed that the critic is the rival of the poet, but I do believe that criticism is a genre of literature or it does not exist.

~Harold Bloom

All that a critic, as critic, can give poets is the deadly encouragement that never ceases to remind them of how heavy their inheritance is.

~Harold Bloom

In the finest critics one hears the full cry of the human. They tell one why it matters to read.

~Harold Bloom

No poem, not even Shakespeare or Milton or Chaucer, is ever strong enough to totally exclude every crucial precursor text or poem.

~Harold Bloom

I think the Greek New Testament is the strongest and most successful misreading of a great prior text in the entire history of influence.

~Harold Bloom

I take it that a successful therapy is an oxymoron.

~Harold Bloom

More even than Southern Presbyterians and Southern Methodists, the Baptists provided the great mass of Confederate enlisted men.

~Harold Bloom

Indeed the three prophecies about the death of individual art are, in their different ways, those of Hegel, Marx, and Freud. I don't see any way of getting beyond those prophecies.

~Harold Bloom

Socrates, in Plato, formulates ideas of order: the Iliad, like Shakespeare, knows that a violent disorder is a great order.

~Harold Bloom

Criticism in the universities, I'll have to admit, has entered a phase where I am totally out of sympathy with 95% of what goes on. It's Stalinism without Stalin.

~Harold Bloom

In fact, it is Shakespeare who gives us the map of the mind. It is Shakespeare who invents Freudian Psychology. Freud finds ways of translating it into supposedly analytical vocabulary.

~Harold Bloom

I don't believe in myths of decline or myths of progress, even as regards the literary scene.

~Harold Bloom

I think Freud is about contamination, but I think that is something he learned from Shakespeare, because Shakespeare is about nothing but contamination, you might say.

~Harold Bloom

The world does not get to be a better or a worse place; it just gets more senescent.

~Harold Bloom

What matters in literature in the end is surely the idiosyncratic, the individual, the flavor or the color of a particular human suffering.

~Harold Bloom

We read to find ourselves, more fully and more strangely than otherwise we could hope to find.

~Harold Bloom

To read in the service of any ideology is not, in my judgment, to read at all.

~Harold Bloom

I am not unique in my elegiac sadness at watching reading die, in the era that celebrates Stephen King and J.K. Rowling rather than Charles Dickens and Lewis Carroll.

~Harold Bloom

The idea of Herman Melville in a writing class is always distressing to me.

~Harold Bloom

The morality of scholarship, as currently practiced, is to encourage everyone to replace difficult pleasures by pleasures universally accessible precisely because they are easier.

~Harold Bloom

Reading well makes children more interesting both to themselves and others, a process in which they will develop a sense of being separate and distinct selves.

~Harold Bloom

I am naive enough to read incessantly because I cannot, on my own, get to know enough people profoundly enough.

~Harold Bloom

Everything in life is arbitrary yet must be over-determined in literature. Jean McGarry knows how to tell a persuasive tale illuminating these truths.

~Harold Bloom

Unless you have read and absorbed the best that can be read and absorbed, you will not think clearly or well.

~Harold Bloom

Personality, in our sense, is a Shakespearean invention.

~Harold Bloom

There is no method except yourself.

~Harold Bloom

Shakespeare is universal.

~Harold Bloom

I would say that there is no future for literary studies as such in the United States.

~Harold Bloom

If we read the Western Canon in order to form our social, political, or personal moral values, I firmly believe we will become monsters of selfishness and exploitation.

~Harold Bloom

Sometimes one succeeds, sometimes one fails.

~Harold Bloom

To be a poet did not occur to me. It was indeed a threshold guarded by demons.

~Harold Bloom

Real reading is a lonely activity.

~Harold Bloom

Literature is achieved anxiety.

~Harold Bloom

There is a God, and his name is Aristophanes.

~Harold Bloom

The very best of all Merwin: I have been reading William since 1952, and always with joy.

~Harold Bloom

Not a moment passes these days without fresh rushes of academic lemmings off the cliffs they proclaim the political responsibilities of the critic, but eventually all this moralizing will subside.

~Harold Bloom

Hamlet, Kierkegaard, Kafka are ironists in the wake of Jesus. All Western irony is a repetition of Jesus' enigmas/riddles, in amalgam with the ironies of Socrates.

~Harold Bloom

No one yet has managed to be post-Shakespearean.

~Harold Bloom

Information is endlessly available to us; where shall wisdom be found?

~Harold Bloom

It is by extending oneself, by exercising some capacity previously unused that you come to a better knowledge of your own potential.

~Harold Bloom

We all fear loneliness, madness, dying. Shakespeare and Walt Whitman, Leopardi and Hart Crane will not cure those fears. And yet these poets bring us fire and light.

~Harold Bloom



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