

Peter Ackroyd Quotes

*People, Past, Book, Believe, Writing, Years, Character, World, Interesting,
Imagination, Thinking, Reading, Ambition, Self, Kings, Important, Spirit, Knows,
Drama, Novelists*

The English can laugh and at the same time strike you down, without the least compunction. It is the secret of their success as a nation.

~Peter Ackroyd

I just wanted to be an ordinary, middle-class person. When I was at Cambridge I made great efforts to lose the last remnants of my cockney accent.

~Peter Ackroyd

There is no humiliation worse than the consciousness of a wasted life. It stains the spirit, forestalls hope, and destroys any motive for action or change.

~Peter Ackroyd

You don't have to be brought up in a grand house to have a sense of the past, and I truly believe that there are certain people to whom or through whom the territory - the place, the past - speaks.

~Peter Ackroyd

The endless chatter of this journey had wearied me.

~Peter Ackroyd

Every book for me is a chapter in the long book which will finally be closed on the day of my death.

~Peter Ackroyd

I don't believe necessarily the past is in the past. It's eternal, it's all around us.

~Peter Ackroyd

To be a writer was always my greatest aim. I remember writing a play about Guy Fawkes when I was 10. I suppose it's significant, at least to me, that my first work should be about a historical figure.

~Peter Ackroyd

Yes, I have inherited the past because I have acknowledged it at last? And, now that I have come to understand it, I no longer need to look back.

~Peter Ackroyd

I believe that the gods themselves are frightened of the world which they have fashioned.

~Peter Ackroyd

I don't know if I have a voice of my own. I don't see me being an important person with something to say. I haven't. I've got nothing to say. My opinion is of no consequence or value.

~Peter Ackroyd

There are so many characters whizzing around inside my head, it's like Looney Tunes. But as soon as I've finished writing about them, I completely forget who they are.

~Peter Ackroyd

The English have always been greedy for news of times past, with that mixture of fatalism and melancholy which is part of the national character.

~Peter Ackroyd

I don't in any sense think of myself as a celebrity, which of course I'm not.

~Peter Ackroyd

I never read in bed, only in my study.

~Peter Ackroyd

I saw a ghost once, about 20 years ago. It took the form of someone coming out of a sleeping body and sitting at the foot of the bed.

~Peter Ackroyd

If I did only one thing at a time I'd think I was wasting my time. If, for example, I only wrote novels I would feel like a charlatan and a fraud.

~Peter Ackroyd

So do we discover, in the world, that our worst fears are unfulfilled; yet we must fear, in order that we may feel delight.

~Peter Ackroyd

A triptych in which the presiding deities are Mother, England and Me.

~Peter Ackroyd

I wanted to be a poet when I was 20; I had no interest in fiction or biography and precious little interest in history, but those three elements in my life have become the most important.

~Peter Ackroyd

Familial love can find an echo in our own hearts just as it did in that of Charles Dickens.

~Peter Ackroyd

I am in the Pitte, but I have gone so deep that I can see the brightness of the Starres at Noon.

~Peter Ackroyd

One can forgive Shakespeare anything, except one's own bad lines.

~Peter Ackroyd

Yet, like the sea and the gallows, London refuses nobody.

~Peter Ackroyd

Freud was just a novelist.

~Peter Ackroyd

I detest self-regard. If my work has taught me anything, it is that

self-aggrandisement is completely unhistorical.

~Peter Ackroyd

When I was a child I wanted to be Pope. My greatest disappointment is missing out on that. I also wanted to be a tap dancer but I never fulfilled that ambition either.

~Peter Ackroyd

I can remember picking up weighty tomes on the history of science and the history of philosophy and reading those when I was small.

~Peter Ackroyd

Under the force of the imagination, nature itself is changed.

~Peter Ackroyd

To watch King Lear is to approach the recognition that there is indeed no meaning in life, and that there are limits to human understanding.

~Peter Ackroyd

London has always provided the landscape for my imagination. It becomes a character - a living being - within each of my books.

~Peter Ackroyd

The best years are when you know what you're doing.

~Peter Ackroyd

No poet is ever completely lost. He has the secret of his childhood safe with him, like some secret cave in which he can kneel. And, when we read his poetry, we can join him there.

~Peter Ackroyd

In London, I've always lived within 10 miles of where I was born. You see, there is something called a spirit of place, and my place happens to be London, at least once a fortnight.

~Peter Ackroyd

I strike up conversations all the time and it is very interesting, finding out about things I know nothing about.

~Peter Ackroyd

I think biography can be more personal than fiction, and certainly can be more expressive.

~Peter Ackroyd

I had to paraphrase the paraphrase.

~Peter Ackroyd

As a Londoner I was able to see how the world of power and money cast its shadow on those who failed.

~Peter Ackroyd

Health, money. That's what people worried about in the 14th century as much as today. I find it so much more interesting than the supposed activities of kings, queens, generals.

~Peter Ackroyd

Bigotry does not consort easily with free trade.

~Peter Ackroyd

There are certain people who seem doomed to buy certain houses. The house expects them. It waits for them.

~Peter Ackroyd

It is strange, is it not, how a person can adore one's soul so much that they adore one's body also?

~Peter Ackroyd

The ordinary routines of life are never chronicled by the historian, but

they make up almost the whole of experience.

~Peter Ackroyd

The world is a sea in which we all must surely drown.

~Peter Ackroyd

Only those with great ambitions know what great fears drive them forward.

~Peter Ackroyd

Is it possible to be nostalgic about old fears?

~Peter Ackroyd

People are much more interesting than people realise.

~Peter Ackroyd

London is a labyrinth, half of stone and half of flesh.

~Peter Ackroyd

It sometimes seems to me that the whole course of English history was one of accident, confusion, chance and unintended consequences - there's no real pattern.

~Peter Ackroyd

Sometimes the silences, the gaps, tell us more than anything else.

~Peter Ackroyd

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