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Quotes by Bataille, Georges

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Georges Bataille (September 16, 1897 – July 9, 1962) was a French writer, anthropologist and philosopher, though he avoided this last term himself.

Intellectual despair results in neither weakness nor dreams, but in violence. It is only a matter of knowing how to give vent to one's rage; whether one only wants to wander like madmen around prisons, or whether one wants to overturn them.

- Bataille, Georges

Life has always taken place in a tumult without apparent cohesion, but it only finds its grandeur and its reality in ecstasy and in ecstatic love.

- Bataille, Georges

Eroticism is assenting to life even in death.

- Bataille, Georges

At man's core there is a voice that wants him never to give in to fear. But if it is true that in general man cannot give in to fear, at the very least he postpones indefinitely the moment when he will have to confront himself with the object of his fear... when he will no longer have the assistance of reason as guaranteed by God, or when he will no longer have the assistance of God such as reason guaranteed. It is necessary to recoil, but it is necessary to leap, and perhaps one only recoils in order to leap better.

- Bataille, Georges

To place oneself in the position of God is painful: being God is equivalent to being tortured. For being God means that one is in harmony with all that is, including the worst. The existence of the worst evils is unimaginable unless God willed them.

- Bataille, Georges

A judgment about life has no meaning except the truth of the one who speaks last, and the mind is at ease only at the moment when everyone is shouting at once and no one can hear a thing.

- Bataille, Georges

Naturally, love's the most distant possibility.

- Bataille, Georges

The essence of morality is a questioning about morality; and the decisive move of human life is to use ceaselessly all light to look for the origin of the opposition between good and evil.

- Bataille, Georges

The anguish of the neurotic individual is the same as that of the saint. The neurotic, the saint are engaged in the same battle. Their blood flows from similar wounds. But the first one gasps and the other one gives.

- Bataille, Georges

Pleasure only starts once the worm has got into the fruit, to become delightful happiness must be tainted with poison.

- Bataille, Georges

Each of us is incomplete compared to someone else -- an animal's incomplete compared to a person... and a person compared to God, who is complete only to be imaginary.

- Bataille, Georges

Sacrifice is nothing other than the production of sacred things.

- Bataille, Georges

Sanity is the lot of those who are most obtuse, for lucidity destroys one's equilibrium: it is unhealthy to honestly endure the labors of the mind which incessantly contradict what they have just established.

- Bataille, Georges

The sovereign being is burdened with a servitude that crushes him, and the condition of free men is deliberate servility.

- Bataille, Georges

Beauty is desired in order that it may be befouled; not for its own sake, but for the joy brought by the certainty of profaning it.

- Bataille, Georges

I believe that truth has only one face: that of a violent contradiction.

- Bataille, Georges

Crime is a fact of the human species, a fact of that species alone, but it is above all the secret aspect, impenetrable and hidden. Crime hides, and by far the most terrifying things are those which elude us.

- Bataille, Georges



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