

1: 20 Wise Quotes from G.K. Chesterton

To call Shakespeare a pessimist for having written the words "out, out, brief candle" is the same as calling him a champion of the ideal of celibacy for having written the words, "Get thee to the nunnery." "It is not Shakespeare's fault," says Chesterton, "that, having to write pessimism for the purpose of a theatrical point, he.

ORG Quotes by and posts relating to one of the most influential authors of the 20th century, G. Chesterton A blog dedicated to providing quotes by and posts relating to one of the most influential and quotable! If you do not know much about GKC, I suggest visiting the webpage of the American Chesterton Society as well as this wonderful Chesterton Facebook Page by a fellow Chestertonian I also have created a list detailing examples of the influence of Chesterton if you are interested, that I work on from time to time. Moreover, for a list of short GKC quotes, I have created one here , citing the sources " Stevenson had found that the secret of life lies in laughter and humility. They are also available for free electronically on another blog of mine here , if you wish to read them that way. Sunday, June 19, "Shakespeare was not in any sense a pessimist; he was, if anything, an optimist so universal as to be able to enjoy even pessimism. They are flying moods which a man with a fixed faith can afford to entertain. That all is vanity, that life is dust and love is ashes, these are frivolities, these are jokes that a Catholic can afford to utter. He knows well enough that there is a life that is not dust and a love that is not ashes. But just as he may let himself go more than the Puritan in the matter of enjoyment, so he may let himself go more than the Puritan in the matter of melancholy. The sad exuberances of Hamlet are merely like the glad exuberances of Falstaff. This is not conjecture; it is the text of Shakespeare. In the very act of uttering his pessimism, Hamlet admits that it is a mood and not the truth. Heaven is a heavenly thing, only to him it seems a foul congregation of vapours. Man is the paragon of animals, only to him he seems a quintessence of dust. Hamlet is quite the reverse of a sceptic. He is a man whose strong intellect believes much more than his weak temperament can make vivid to him. But this power of knowing a thing without feeling it, this power of believing a thing without experiencing it, this is an old Catholic complexity Shakespeare confesses his moods mostly by the mouths of villains and failures , but he never sets up his moods against his mind. His cry of vanitas vanitatum is itself only a harmless vanity. Readers may not agree with my calling him Catholic with a big C; but they will hardly complain of my calling him catholic with a small one. And that is here the principal point. Shakespeare was not in any sense a pessimist; he was, if anything, an optimist so universal as to be able to enjoy even pessimism.

2: Chesterton on Shakespeare - G. K. Chesterton Book Reviews

Chesterton took a keen interest in the English literary tradition, particularly the works of England's greatest playwright, William Shakespeare. In this original collection, Chesterton expert Dale Ahlquist collects the best of the noted author and critic's short essays, reviews, and introductions.

Ben Jonson , Preface to the First Folio I remember your saying that you had notions of a good Genius presiding over you. I have of late had the same thought - for things which I do half at Random are afterwards confirmed by my judgment in a dozen features of Propriety. Is it too daring to fancy Shakespeare this Presider? John Keats , Letter to B. Haydon, May When I read Shakespeare I am struck with wonder That such trivial people should muse and thunder In such lovely language. Lawrence But Shakespeare knows what the sphinx thinks, if anybody does. His genius is penetrative as cold midwinter entering every room, and making warmth shiver in ague fits. I think Shakespeare never errs in his logical sequence in character. He surprises us, seems unnatural to us, but because we have been superficial observers; while genius will disclose those truths to which we are blind. Quayle , Some Words on Loving Shakespeare. John Milton , Epitaph on Shakespeare And so sepulchered in such pomp dost lie, That kings for such a tomb would wish to die. He has written with a view to be a mirror of things as they are; and shows the office of the true poet and literary man, which is to re-create the soul of man as God has created it, and human society as man has made it. Laurence Olivier Wonderful women! Have you ever thought how much we all, and women especially, owe to Shakespeare for his vindication of women in these fearless, high-spirited, resolute and intelligent heroines? Dame Ellen Terry One of the greatest geniuses that ever existed, Shakespeare, undoubtedly wanted taste. Horace Walpole , Letter to Wren, Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned, Mindless of its just honours; with this key Shakespeare unlocked his heart. William Wordsworth , Miscellaneous Sonnets He is as a mountain, whose majesty and multitudinous beauty, meaning, and magnitude and impress, must be gotten by slow processes in journeying about it through many days. Who sits under its pines at noon, lies beside its streams for rest, walks under its lengthening shadows as under a cloud, and has listened to the voices of its water falls, thrilling the night and calling to the spacious firmament as if with intent to be heard "very far off," has thus learned the mountain, vast of girth, kingly in altitude, perpetual in sovereignty. He, so far as touches our earth horizon, is ubiquitous. Looking at him sum-totally, we feel his mass, and say we have looked upon majesty. From A hero and some other folk, We shall never overestimate Shakespeare, because we can not. Some men and things lie beyond the danger of hyperbole. No exaggeration is possible concerning them, seeing they transcend all dreams. Space can not be conceived by the most luxuriant imagination, holding, as it does, all worlds, and capable of holding another universe besides, and with room to spare. Clearly, we can not overestimate space. Thought and vocabulary become bankrupt when they attempt this bewildering deed. Genius is as immeasurable as space. Shakespeare can not be measured. We can not go about him, since life fails, leaving the journey not quite well begun. Yet may we attempt what can not be performed, because each attempt makes us worthy, and we are measured, not by what we achieve, but by what we attempt. From A hero and some other folk, In the Spotlight Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament; Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident. Such a man would never even have dreamed of writing up a cynical theme, unless he happened to be out of sorts, sick perhaps, cross, or not himself. And Shakespeare, with all the genius and all the sincere, passionate acrimony which he displays in Timon and in Troilus , has done no more than exhibit the nervous depression of an optimist - a sort of peevishness, very different from the logic, the cruelty, and the perverse beauty of true cynicism.

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This site presents literary criticism demonstrating that. To submit your essay for publication arguing either for or against this position, email us - kevin.thewordinc. Chesterton shows us the only way to read Shakespeare. Almost nobody reads Shakespeare any more. And of those who do, almost nobody reads his long and obscure poem *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. And he quotes from it, as will I, to begin this lecture. Truth may seem, but cannot be: That, my friends, is an epigram for the modern world or perhaps its epitaph. For Chesterton teaches us how to read Shakespeare by teaching us how not to read Shakespeare. To read Shakespeare rightly, we must stop trying to bury Truth and Beauty; we must stop trying to strangle Goodness and put a butt-ugly imposter in her place. In short, to read Shakespeare well, like Chesterton did, we need to give up our mistaken common approach to life. What mistaken common approach am I talking about? Because - and I say this emphatically not as a partisan - the only way to understand Chesterton; the only way to understand Shakespeare; the only way to understand life - is as a Catholic. Anything shy of the fullness of Catholic Truth gives us first a comfortable security, but eventually an empty self-parody. By which I would suggest she means what Macbeth himself does - which is not only catering to his own disordered desires, but trying to found his own kingdom, an earthly city, upon these disordered desires, these sins. For it is not so much sin itself that does us in, but our frenzied attempts to establish our lives so that we can be secure in our sins. The love that these men have for one another is the love of friendship, something that would necessarily exclude any genital encounter between them. Have you ever been in any production of this play that actually tried to sell to the audience this crazy notion? They are clearly gay lovers. Such a directorial choice - especially one heartily endorsed by the actors - reveals the most fundamental misunderstanding of Portia, of the play, of Shakespeare, of virtue, and frankly of life itself. Because I sense I am not in fact making my point. Even though missing the point is part of my point. He can read a book and get it. He can read a play and get it. He can read a joke and get it. He can read the signs in the sky and the signs of the times. He can read life - and he can write about it. The Catholic Church says that the Bible alone does not convey everything we need to know about salvation. Chesterton says of George Bernard Shaw, who did not know how to read Shakespeare His misunderstanding of Shakespeare arose largely from the fact that he is a Puritan, while Shakespeare was spiritually a Catholic. The former is always screwing himself up to see truth; the latter is often content that truth is there. The Puritan is only strong enough to stiffen; the Catholic is strong enough to relax. This power of knowing a thing without feeling it, this power of believing a thing without experiencing it, this is an old Catholic complexity, and the Puritan has never understood it. And this is what people do all the time. As Joseph Pearce himself says, "There are two kinds of people. Those who do things to books, and those who let books do things to them. Or as we read in the Book of Wisdom, "For the worshipping of idols Chesterton ends his famous essay comparing the Catholic Shakespeare with the Protestant Milton thus This is the key to everything Chesterton writes about Shakespeare. It is, I would suggest, the same way Chesterton approaches all of life. Which is what made him "spiritually" and actually a Catholic. Be sure to get this book when it comes out. To begin with, and to echo what I just said, Chesterton is emphatic that Shakespeare cannot be co-opted for the sake of a "message". Chesterton faults his nemesis Shaw for looking for something Shavian in Shakespeare. Gilbert Keith says of George Bernard He was looking [in the plays of Shakespeare] for that ghastly thing which Nonconformists call a Message, and continue to call a Message, even when they have become atheists and do not know who the Message is from. He was looking for a system; one of the very little systems that do very truly have their day. The system of Kant; the system of Hegel; the system of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche and Marx and all the rest. In each of these examples a man sprang up and pretended to have a thought that nobody had ever had. But the great poet only professes to express the thought that everybody has always had. Before the time of Shakespeare, men had grown used to the Ptolemaic

astronomy, and since the time of Shakespeare men have grown used to the Copernican astronomy. But poets have never grown used to stars; and it is their business to prevent anybody else ever growing used to them. Naming the stars gives us no true profit of them. If anything, it makes us proud, thinking we have somehow comprehended them; whereas poetry reminds us that they are not made for our self-interest, but to be wondered at – to be grateful for. And while modern audiences and readers are frustrated by the archaic language used by Shakespeare, and at times have to struggle just to understand what old Will is simply saying; still, with some effort we can learn to understand this poetry - but we can never really manage to translate it. Chesterton, again sparring with Shaw, writes I will give Mr. Then is there mirth in Heaven When earthly things made even Atone together. Limit the matter to the single incomparable line, "When earthly things made even. If the words, "When earthly things made even" were presented to us in the form of, "When terrestrial affairs are reduced to an equilibrium," the meaning would not merely have been spoilt, the meaning would have entirely disappeared. This identity between the matter and the manner is simply the definition of poetry. The aim of good prose words is to mean what they say. The aim of good poetical words is to mean what they do not say. Bullet point number three And yet this does not mean that Chesterton sees Shakespeare being "particular" in the sense of nitpicking; if Gertrude were to ask Gilbert as she asked Hamlet, "Why seems it so particular with thee? Which leads me to bullet point four. Plato held, and the child holds, that the most important thing about a ship let us say is that it is a ship. Thus, all these pictures are designed to express things in their quiddity. If they draw a tower, its whole object is to be towering. If they draw a flower, its whole object is to be flowering. Their pencils often go wrong as to how the thing looks; [but] their intellects never go wrong as to what the thing is. To see a thing in aspects is to be crippled, to be defective. A full and healthy man realises a thing called a ship; he realises it simultaneously from all sides and with all senses. One of his senses tells him that the ship is tall or white, another that the ship is moving or standing still, another that it is battling with broken and noisy waves, another that it is surrounded and soaked with the smell of the sea. But a deaf man would only know that the ship was moving by the passing of objects. A blind man would only know that the ship was moving by the sound of the swirling water. A blind and deaf man would only know that a ship was moving by the fact that he was seasick. This is the thing called "impressionism", that typically modern thing. Impressionism means that, whereas Nature has made our senses and impressions to support each other, we desire to suppress one part of perception and employ the other. Impressionism, in short, may be justly summarised as "winking the other eye". The impressionist desires to treat mankind as a brood of the Cyclops. It is not surprising that Whistler wore a monocle; his philosophy was monocular. In applying this to Shakespeare, Chesterton observes Hamlet indignant at the singing grave-digger. Hamlet wishes to make the play of Hamlet a Maeterlinck play - united, artistic, melancholy, in a monotone. He wishes the Grave-digger to be sad at his grave-digging; he wishes the Grave-digger to be in the picture. But the Grave-digger refused to be in the picture, and the grave-digger will always refuse. The common man, engaged in tragic occupations, has always refused and will always refuse, to be tragic. In other words, while James Joyce said the Catholic Church means "here comes everybody", Chesterton would have countered by saying the Catholic Church means "here comes everything". But everything understood as ordered and related by God. Not the everything of chaos, but the everything that connects to everything else in a hierarchical way, in a way of degree or inherent value. In other words, not the one thing of impressionism, but the everything of our senses and impressions, each of which Nature has made to support the other, and to see the substance of a thing behind our impression of it.. The characters were more than "impressions" in an "impressionistic" series of scenes; they were rounded and living. Falstaff was neither brave nor honest, nor chaste, nor temperate, nor clean, but he had the eighth cardinal virtue for which no name has ever been found. Hamlet was not fitted for this world: Now a more minor critic and a more pedestrian thinker would have marched along with that insight and denied any ethical content in the plays for the rest of his career. They are about how what we do reveals how God has made us. Chesterton applies this insipid psychology to the plays and in doing so reveals how true psychological insight, like that of Shakespeare, reveals not suppressed Freudian tendencies, but the profoundly moral nature of our makeup. Chesterton notes – Lady Macbeth does not suffer as a sleep-walker because she has resisted the impulse to murder Duncan, but rather by some curious trick of thought because she has

yielded to it. On the theory of psycho-analysis, as expounded, a man ought to be haunted by the ghosts of all the men he has not murdered.

4: The Soul of Wit: G. K. Chesterton on William Shakespeare

In this original collection, The Soul of Wit: G.K. Chesterton on William Shakespeare, Dale Ahlquist collects and introduces the best of the noted author and critic's Shakespeare-related essays and reviews.

5: G.K. Chesterton on William Blake and Mysticism - The Culture Club

In an earlier essay on the Bacon-Shakespeare issue, dated March 9, , Chesterton argued rather in favor of Shakespeare. Bacon's own works did not show him knowing all the things that whoever wrote Shakespeare knew.

6: The Christian Shakespeare: Chesterton and Shakespeare

But Chesterton understood that while Shakespeare's plays were not merely ethical, they were utterly and staggeringly moral - which is to say the plays are about the Consequential, they are about the consequences that grow out of our actions, our limitations, our sins.

7: Top shelves for Chesterton on Shakespeare

Author: G. K. Chesterton "The sane man who is sane enough to see that Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare is sane enough not to worry whether he did or not," quipped G. K. Chesterton. The prolific author " whose works include journalism, poetry, plays, history, biography, apologetics, and detective fiction " took a keen interest in the English.

8: - On Shakespeare by G. K. Chesterton

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9: The Most Famous Quotations About William Shakespeare

Author and critic G. K. Chesterton took a keen interest in the English literary tradition, particularly in terms of the plays by the country's greatest dramatist. In this original collection, Chesterton expert Dale Ahlquist collects and introduces the best of the noted author and critic's Shakespeare-related essays and reviews.

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