

# The struggle between Eclecticism and its inherited illusions of contemporary society in *Capitalism, Modernism and Postmodernism* by Terry Eagleton

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## ABSTRACT

In the present day society, it is vital to appear knowledgeable about the manipulations of Capitalism. In the ways of Westernisation, forces like power systems, capital accumulations, voluntary exchanges and wage labours have thickened all over the world. It covers the world under one roof of Capitalism, which acts as a mirage. It leads to Privatisation. The power is being held by one party, comprising of rich people. Terry Eagleton provides an overview of the rejection of the lower class people in the light of Marxism. Eagleton conceals this rejection with the rise of Postmodernism. He is therefore against Postmodernist concerns. People are interested in eclectic substances and hence fall preys to these illusions. Common people are being exploited to fill the treasury of the rich. From the advent of Modernism, people were made to believe that modern trends will prove good. In Postmodernism, the styles of elements mixed up to provide a variety for the people. This is the first step towards exploitation. All the traditions return knowingly or unknowingly and willingly or unwillingly, in this contemporary era. No regulation is possible under such unfavourable conditions. Hence an awakening is expected. It must sprout out from the individual awareness to take a toll on the economical, political and cultural conditions of the world. Thus this paper showcases the illusions in which people live today and the eclectic mindsets that corrupt the ongoing society under the effects of Capitalism.

Key Words: Marxism, Fabrication, Exploitation, Freedom and Consumerism.

Terry Eagleton is a British Marxist who always strived for freedom. The contemporary society is a caricature of Postmodernism. According to Eagleton, Modernism took off with an astronomical objective of trying to deviate from the stereotypical prototypes and venturing into a new realm of life. The Avant-garde principle flourished to establish an

aesthetic production of art. The intentions actually turned hostile when some well-to-do people took Postmodernism as a vehicle to plant irrational beliefs in the minds of common people. All the values become carelessly lost.

The modern trends induce isolation. Hence 'Postmodernism' is motiveless, disfigured and ambiguous. When a pile of bricks are placed in an art gallery, the whole goodness and delicacy is lost. In the same way, Postmodernism has exercised an unusual rendering to the world by ways of varied subject matters. Buying chocolates for a larger price is considered to be a symbol of prosperity and social status. Advertisements promote such unhealthy visions. The rise of technologies paved the way for performing and conducting tasks with ease and less discomfort. Unfortunately, technologies have transformed life into a commoditised whole. Money decides the value. The importance of humans has declined endlessly. The Classics stressed upon bringing out the truth behind every subject. At the same time, it cannot be perceived that Modernism is completely devoid of truth. Though Franz Kafka has fictionally portrayed elements, the ultimate lesson he conveys is about real elements.

Both Modernism and Postmodernism look to escape history, for the people not to be misguided. The reality is that both of these movements enter strongly into history back again. Though there are diverse subjects, writers choose to write only in common topics that have already been dealt. Literature usually reflects the culture, which the author of the work wishes to show. Hence it is impossible to avoid political and cultural illusions. As a result of these false understandings, corruption hovers all over the world. Every relationship is identified with a cultural symbol but now it has become a commercial icon. Even while a show in a TV channel or a movie is going on, advertisements roll into the scene. It is a distasteful act. Whether it is interesting or not, it is fate to watch it. Truth is mostly dead in such publicity criteria.

Eclecticism is a fabrication. When a movie is completely towards exposing the truth without any fictional entertaining elements, the movie gets a slap. On the contrary, commercial movies are turning out to be highly profitable. People demand heterogeneity. It sounds impractical when a person voices against injustice, as all are made to believe that no justice can be achieved. When a person is socially responsible, who casts vote, educates children, engages in social reforms, fights against injustice and lives for the good of others will be valued as a 'less engaging' person. On the other hand, a person who watches a western movie, uses perfumes from other countries, buys costly clothes and does his lunch at MacDonald will be an interesting person. Changes are eternal but it must be for the good. This is an 'irony' of life.

'Alienation' should be the right term to describe the people of today. 'Fast food culture' cleans up all the healthy activities. Humans always credit themselves for this change

of trends but in actuality, it is only the wish of a particular group of people. 'Games' are for entertainment purposes but now it has pulled enough customers to push them into destruction through its electronic enhancements. Children were healthy when they were physically involved in a game but now they sulk themselves in a mobile or laptop and never are recovered again. Sexual relationship, consumption and fashions are truly related to engaging aspects of life. On the whole, Eagleton highlights the 'meaninglessness' of life.

There are plenty of choices for people to make. People shall choose one evil or the other. A person may be a father, a mother or a child, everyone cannot escape Consumerism. In literature, Para-literature suits the tastes of the people. Mystery, fantasy and murder interest people. The words, spellings, structures and semantics have been adjusted to meet the expectations of the people. People expect a photograph that must be so candid to grab the interest of others. Everyone expects focus. In reality, no one is ready to respond to the whims and fancies of others. All have time only to look after themselves. They cannot even understand that a photograph cannot reflect the original standards. Imageries, comic expressions and fragments are the will and want of the reading public.

Cultural mutations occur as a result of this eclectic mindset of the people. As Eagleton presents, "workers, peasants and petty bourgeois, generally called 'the people has disappeared'" (ATG:147). The new world is full of objects. The irresistible forces in humans have met a decline. Renewal of existing things is sought. New art buildings have emerged. When corruption peeps in, then the whole design and colour of the buildings get lost. In the present context, Law and Ethics are the inherited illusions. Ethics must be constant. But today, it is a framework set up by the rich. Eagleton looks at the unwanted waste of energy in the name of 'struggle'. He feels nothing is left to recover.

People are unconsciously alienated from their beliefs. Even 'belief' is 'fashioned'. The Modernists argue that things must be perceived in the perspective of an individual. Hence, being fragmentary is a boon. But Postmodernism slashed it through a condition that anything can be done by anyone. This is not freedom at all. Eagleton talks about a freedom that must uplift the lives of the people. People dig into illogical conditions. Thus pessimism roots up unexpectedly. Class struggles automatically rupture the lives. 'Parody' came into existence to make fun of a person and place hidden motives in the minds of the onlookers. 'Pastiche', on the other hand, is a stitch of different cultural relations.

The society feels 'dystopian' in the homeland. Then where can Utopia be found? Utopia is in the present and not to be found in the future. If the present is not utopian, then the future certainly cannot bring it. Walter Benjamin argues that history must be meditated but Nietzsche goes with forgetting history. Paul de Man is of the view that literature cannot avoid History and will always tightly bind itself to History. Though these arguments find place,

illusions have never gone out of place. If Modernism is Capitalism, then Postmodernism is Late Capitalism. The wish to integrate art and society has found no soil to flourish. With repeated attempts to overcome the dead tradition, it rejuvenates itself back again. The readers are new and fresh with unquenched desires. While satisfying such desires, all sensitive, unhealthy utterances are brought into practice. This is a serious exploitation of young readers.

Readers buy a book for the author's tendency to excite. The cover of the book, the colour, the quality of paper and even the logo used will immensely respond to the desires of the reader. The complacent nature has walked over the minds of the people. Movements have emerged from Fascism to Feminism, but they just remain choices. Choices alone cannot develop as breakthroughs. Varieties actually lead to confusions. The confusions lead to mistakes. Mistakes lead to misconceptions. Eventually, misconceptions are encouraged by Postmodernism. All the opportunities can be grabbed without any declarations. It creates conflicts amongst people. The competition is made tough. Human relationships have descended gradually.

According to Eagleton, Postmodernism is 'tyranically ethical'. He terms so because it appears ethical, but the truth is different. Positivity couldn't survive for long as the passage of time carries wonders. The wonders are of both good and bad. Art must not fall for commodification. But Brecht suggests to begin "bad new things" and not to follow "good old ones". There are still self-doubts in the current society. Everything appears as a free play to cut through the lines wherever one wishes. If past is not needed now, then what the future will be like? It will again neglect the past values. So all the values of today are to be forgotten in the future days. Nothing could be shared in future. Only elimination will act hard towards others.

Finally, the parasites of the world shatter the lives of common people into fragments by providing them with unhealthy combinations. Technologies experiment people. Vulgar errors are being wonderfully presented. The energy of truth has drained. Money rules the people. Hence Eagleton warns people against the attractiveness of Postmodernism. He wants people to stay away from the illustrated frameworks of the rich. A cognitive awareness should swallow the growing evils of Capitalism. Thus the struggle between the eclecticism and its inherited illusions is probably the toughest battle to fight in this contemporary societal conditions.

#### Work Cited

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