

Terry Eagleton Quotes

*Thinking, Past, Literary Theory, Culture, Political, Reading, Evil, Humanity,
Literature, Mean, Self, Art, People, Men, Writing, Believe, Lying, Book, Needs,
Jesus*

Deconstruction insists not that truth is illusory but that it is institutional.

~Terry Eagleton

After all, if you do not resist the apparently inevitable, you will never know how inevitable the inevitable was.

~Terry Eagleton

Imagine someone holding forth on biology whose only knowledge of the subject is 'The Book of British Birds,' and you have a rough idea of what it feels like to read Richard Dawkins on theology.

~Terry Eagleton

Genuine equality means not treating everyone the same, but attending equally to everyone's different needs.

~Terry Eagleton

A socialist is just someone who is unable to get over his or her astonishment that most people who have lived and died have spent lives of wretched, fruitless, unremitting toil.

~Terry Eagleton

Socialism is the completion of democracy, not the negation of it.

~Terry Eagleton

Modern capitalist nations are the fruit of a history of slavery, genocide, violence and exploitation every bit as abhorrent as Mao's China or Stalin's Soviet Union.

~Terry Eagleton

Understanding is always in some sense retrospective, which is what Hegel meant by remarking that the owl of Minerva flies only at night.

~Terry Eagleton

Schizophrenic language has in this sense an interesting resemblance

to poetry.

~Terry Eagleton

Postmodernism is among other things a sick joke at the expense of... revolutionary avant-gardism.

~Terry Eagleton

The liberal state is neutral between capitalism and its critics until the critics look like they are winning.

~Terry Eagleton

Yahweh is presented in the Jewish Bible as stateless and nationless. He can't be used as a totem or fetish in that way.

~Terry Eagleton

All desire springs from a lack, which it strives continually to fill.

~Terry Eagleton

God chose what is weakest in the world to shame the strong.

~Terry Eagleton

If it is true that we need a degree of certainty to get by, it is also true that too much of the stuff can be lethal.

~Terry Eagleton

Like the rest of us, Tom Paulin is a bundle of contradictions. At its finest, his work is brave, adventurous, original and wonderfully idiosyncratic.

~Terry Eagleton

The past can be used to renew the present, not just to bury it.

~Terry Eagleton

In the deep night of metaphysics, all cats look black.

~Terry Eagleton

You can tell that the capitalist system is in trouble when people start talking about capitalism.

~Terry Eagleton

I say that virtue is really all about enjoying yourself, living fully; but of course it is far from obvious what living fully actually means.

~Terry Eagleton

Nothing in human life is inherently private.

~Terry Eagleton

Americans use the word "dream" as often as psychoanalysts do.

~Terry Eagleton

Cynicism and naivety lie cheek by jowl in the American imagination; if the United States is one of the most venal nations on Earth, it is also one of the most earnestly idealistic.

~Terry Eagleton

Today, nostalgia is almost as unacceptable as racism.

~Terry Eagleton

Works of art cannot save us. They can simply render us more sensitive to what needs to be repaired.

~Terry Eagleton

If the masses are not thrown a few novels, they may react by throwing up a few barricades.

~Terry Eagleton

Historical determinism is a recipe for political quietism.

~Terry Eagleton

Negativity is often looked upon [in the USA] as a kind of thought crime. Not since the advent of socialist realism has the world witnessed such pathological upbeatness.

~Terry Eagleton

Language, identity and forms of life are the terms in which political demands are shaped and voiced.

~Terry Eagleton

It is silly to call fat people "gravitationally challenged", a self-righteous fetishism of language which is no more than a symptom of political frustration.

~Terry Eagleton

The political currents that topped the global agenda in the late 20th century - revolutionary nationalism, feminism and ethnic struggle - place culture at their heart.

~Terry Eagleton

The Kantian imperative to have the courage to think for oneself has involved a contemptuous disregard for the resources of tradition and an infantile view of authority as inherently oppressive.

~Terry Eagleton

Capitalism cannot survive without a working class, while the working class can flourish a lot more freely without capitalism.

~Terry Eagleton

Successful revolutions are those which end up by erasing all traces of themselves.

~Terry Eagleton

Most students of literature can pick apart a metaphor or spot an ethnic stereotype, but not many of them can say things like: 'The poem's

sardonic tone is curiously at odds with its plodding syntax.

~Terry Eagleton

History works itself out by an inevitable internal logic.

~Terry Eagleton

Literature transforms and intensifies ordinary language, deviates systematically from everyday speech.

~Terry Eagleton

It is capitalism, not Marxism, that trades in futures.

~Terry Eagleton

Evil is often supposed to be without rhyme or reason.

~Terry Eagleton

It is true that too much belief can be bad for your health.

~Terry Eagleton

Being brought up in a culture is a matter of learning appropriate forms of feeling as much as particular ways of thinking.

~Terry Eagleton

The study of history and philosophy, accompanied by some acquaintance with art and literature, should be for lawyers and engineers as well as for those who study in arts faculties.

~Terry Eagleton

I attacked Dawkins's book on God because I think he is theologically illiterate.

~Terry Eagleton

Most poetry in the modern age has retreated to the private sphere, turning its back on the political realm.

~Terry Eagleton

Ideology... is a kind of contemporary mythology, a realm which has purged itself of ambiguity and alternative possibility.

~Terry Eagleton

The humanities should constitute the core of any university worth the name.

~Terry Eagleton

I value my Catholic background very much. It taught me not to be afraid of rigorous thought, for one thing.

~Terry Eagleton

The conversion of agnostic High Tories to the Anglican church is always rather suspect. It seems too pat and predictable, too clearly a matter of politics rather than faith.

~Terry Eagleton

Anyone can be tolerant of those who are tolerant.

~Terry Eagleton

Writing seems to rob me of my being: it is a second hand mode of communication, a pallid, mechanical transcript of speech, and so always at one remove from my consciousness.

~Terry Eagleton

The frontier between public and private shifts from time to time and culture to culture.

~Terry Eagleton

It is language which speaks in literature, in all its swarming 'polysemic' plurality, not the author himself.

~Terry Eagleton

The most compelling confirmation of Marx's theory of history is late capitalist society. There is a sense in which this case is becoming truer as time passes.

~Terry Eagleton

Irish fiction is full of secrets, guilty pasts, divided identities. It is no wonder that there is such a rich tradition of Gothic writing in a nation so haunted by history.

~Terry Eagleton

You've got to have a sense of different audiences. I'm a kind of performer manque - I come from a long line of failed actors!

~Terry Eagleton

Man eternally tries to get back to an organic past that has slipped just beyond his reach.

~Terry Eagleton

Those who sentimentally indulge humanity do it no favours.

~Terry Eagleton

The present is only understandable through the past, with which it forms a living continuity; and the past is always grasped from our own partial viewpoint within the present.

~Terry Eagleton

It is important to see that, in the critique of ideology, only those interventions will work which make sense to the mystified subject itself.

~Terry Eagleton

For Aristotle, goodness is a kind of prospering in the precarious affair of being human.

~Terry Eagleton

Evil may be 'unscientific' but so is a song or a smile.

~Terry Eagleton

As far as belief goes, postmodernism prefers to travel light: it has beliefs, to be sure, but it does not have faith

~Terry Eagleton

For the liberal state to accommodate a diversity of beliefs while having few positive convictions is one of the more admirable achievements of civilization.

~Terry Eagleton

Language always pre-exists us: it is always already 'in place', waiting to assign us our places within it.

~Terry Eagleton

It is difficult to think of an origin without wanting to go back beyond it.

~Terry Eagleton

It is false to believe that the sun revolves around the earth, but it is not absurd.

~Terry Eagleton

I enjoy popularisation and I think I'm reasonably good at it. I also think it's a duty. It's just so pedagogically stupid to forget how difficult one found these ideas oneself to begin with.

~Terry Eagleton

There seems to be something in humanity which will not bow meekly to the insolence of power.

~Terry Eagleton

The truth is that the past exists no more than the future, even though it feels as though it does.

~Terry Eagleton

The German philosopher Walter Benjamin had the curious notion that we could change the past. For most of us, the past is fixed while the future is open.

~Terry Eagleton

Evil is unintelligible. It is just a thing in itself, like boarding a crowded commuter train wearing only a giant boa constrictor. There is no context which would make it explicable.

~Terry Eagleton

Scratch a schoolboy and you find a savage.

~Terry Eagleton

All consciousness is consciousness of something: in thinking I am aware that my thought is 'pointing towards' some object.

~Terry Eagleton

Ivory towers are as rare as bowling alleys in tribal cultures.

~Terry Eagleton

If we were not called upon to work in order to survive, we might simply lie around all day doing nothing.

~Terry Eagleton

What's wrong with a bit of nostalgia between friends? I think nostalgia sometimes gets too much of a bad press.

~Terry Eagleton

Any attempt to define literary theory in terms of a distinctive method is doomed to failure.

~Terry Eagleton

The truth is that liberal humanism is at once largely ineffectual, and the best ideology of the 'human' that present bourgeois society can muster.

~Terry Eagleton

Like all the best radical positions, then, mine is a thoroughly traditionalist one.

~Terry Eagleton

If history moves forward, knowledge of it travels backwards, so that in writing of our own recent past we are continually meeting ourselves coming the other way.

~Terry Eagleton

Theology, however implausible many of its truth claims, is one of the most ambitious theoretical arenas left in an increasingly specialized world

~Terry Eagleton

Reading a text is more like tracing this process of constant flickering than it is like counting the beads on a necklace.

~Terry Eagleton

We live in a society which on the one hand pressurizes us into the pursuit of instant gratification, and the other hand imposes on whole sectors of the population and endless deferment of fulfillment.

~Terry Eagleton

Literary texts do not exist on bookshelves: they are processes of signification materialized only in the practice of reading. For literature to happen, the reader is quite as vital as the author.

~Terry Eagleton

When one emphasizes, as Jacques Derrida once remarked, one

always overemphasizes.

~Terry Eagleton

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