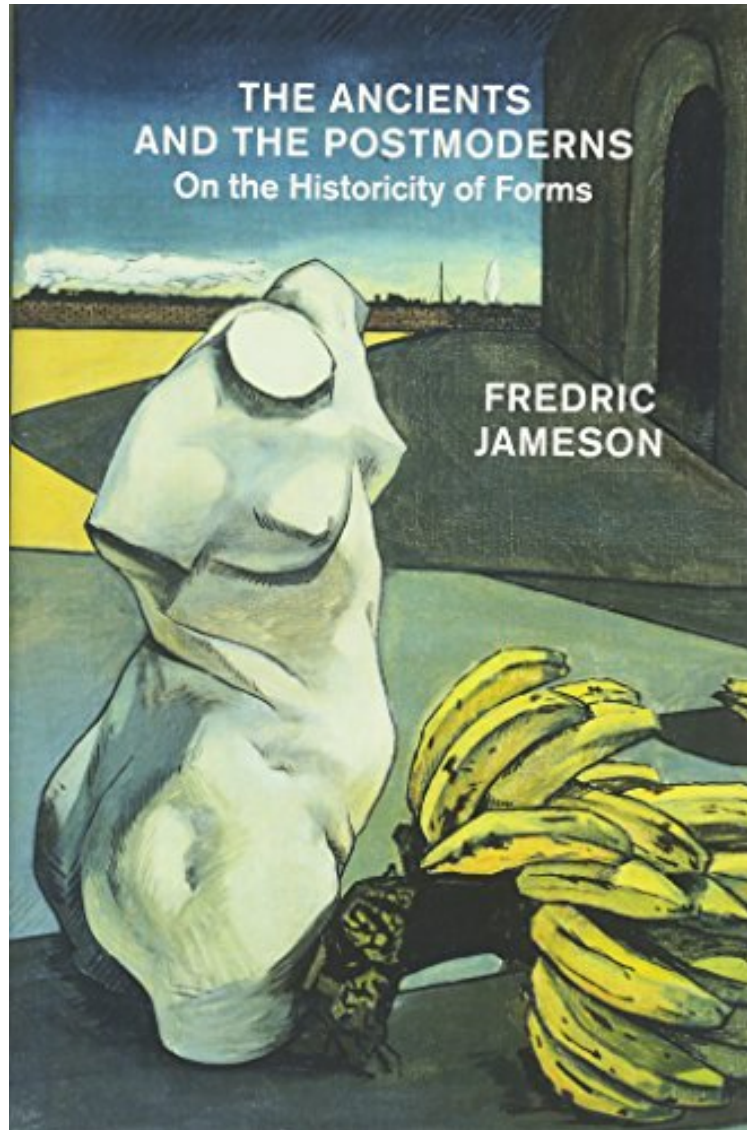


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## The Ancients and the Postmoderns: On the Historicity of Forms

*Fredric Jameson*

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**Fredric Jameson : The Ancients and the Postmoderns: On the Historicity of Forms** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Ancients and the Postmoderns: On the Historicity of Forms:

11 of 13 people found the following review helpful. Nothing just stands on its ownBy David WinebergIt is always fascinating to read what experts have concluded from a microscopic examination of a work of art. They put things in historical perspective, in biblical context, and find similarities and anomalies, dialectic conundrums, support and

contradiction - where I see or hear beauty. So I appreciate the different perspective. This book is the latest collection from Fredric Jameson, as erudite, expert and analytical as any author ever has been. He analyses artists, film directors, novels, films and tv shows. Some of them you've even heard of. He follows a dictum of Thomas Mann: Only the exhaustive is truly interesting. (He quotes it twice.) These then are substantially all of Jameson's thoughts on these works, including the references, tangents, asides and free associations. They are piled high and thick. Reading *The Ancient and the Postmodern* was like stepping into an alternate universe, where nothing was as it seemed to the naked eye and the unsharpened mind. Jameson's intensive scrutiny is otherworldly and so granular as to be mystifying. Sometimes you no longer remember what was under consideration. It is filled with dense references, facts and mysterious sentences like: Leitmotif is the scar left by destiny on the musical present. Jameson's obvious passion is Wagner and Mahler. Their era redefined music. He has seen their works multiple times, can distinguish different directors' productions and different performers' interpretations. He links them to past present and future, moral values, trends, fashions, and the tangents of adaptations. They get about a third of the book. The central theme is: like a black hole at the center of every galaxy, works of art must have a contradiction at their center in order to win any value. This colors his approach to everything. Whether or not it is valid is beyond the scope. The irony, if there is one, is that Jameson looks at the macro period from the Baroque to the present in the tiniest micro increments, dwelling on fine details in every medium. Drawing historic conclusions from this approach is impossible. His Marxist credentials are on vivid display, which is the major reason most readers would want this book. But his text is so much more dense than say, the accessible Marxist Slavoj Žižek. It doesn't inspire further reading. Having read the in-depth appreciations of all these artists and authors, I have no desire to rush out and acquire any of their works, which is normally how my reading branches out. It is nonetheless, a remarkable ride. David Wineberg 7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. In this work, Fredric Jameson essentially performs a massive ... By Earl In this work, Fredric Jameson essentially performs a massive compare and contrast exercise between modernism and postmodernism. His examples are examined extensively for locations of a call and respond, a postmodern response to a modernist call. Aside from any overarching thesis in the book, the close readings of the various 'texts', from paintings and music to film, are well worth the time and effort given to them. Jameson is an accessible but not simplistic writer. The book is meant to be a discussion with the reader which means some effort is needed. But with the effort comes new perspectives on works mostly familiar with a few lesser known works thrown in. I will revisit this book again and fully expect to gain new insights yet again. Reviewed from an ARC made available by the publisher via NetGalley.

Fredric Jameson sweeps from the Renaissance to *The Wire* High modernism is now as far from us as antiquity was for the Renaissance. Such is the premise of Fredric Jameson's major new work in which modernist works, this time in painting (Rubens) and music (Wagner and Mahler), are pitted against late-modernist ones (in film) as well as a variety of postmodern experiments (from SF to *The Wire*, from Eurotrash in opera to Altman and East German literature): all of which attempt, in their different ways, to invent new forms to grasp a specific social totality. Throughout the historical periods, argues Jameson, the question of narrative persists through its multiple formal changes and metamorphoses.

Praise for *A Singular Modernity*: Fredric Jameson is America's leading Marxist critic. A prodigiously energetic thinker whose writings sweep majestically from Sophocles to science fiction. Terry Eagleton Praise for *Postmodernism*: For anybody hoping to understand not just the cultural but the political and social implications of postmodernism Jameson's book is a fundamental, nonpareil text. Sunday Times The scope and profundity of *Postmodernism*, covering theory, architecture, film, video and economics, is truly staggering Brilliant. Independent About the Author Fredric Jameson is Distinguished Professor of Comparative Literature at Duke University. The author of numerous books, he has over the last three decades developed a richly nuanced vision of Western cultures' relation to political economy. He was a recipient of the 2008 Holberg International Memorial Prize. He is the author of many books, including *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*; *The Cultural Turn*; *A Singular Modernity*; *The Modernist Papers*; *Archaeologies of the Future*; *Brecht and Method*; *Ideologies of Theory*; *Valences of the Dialectic*; *The Hegel Variations*; and *Representing Capital*.