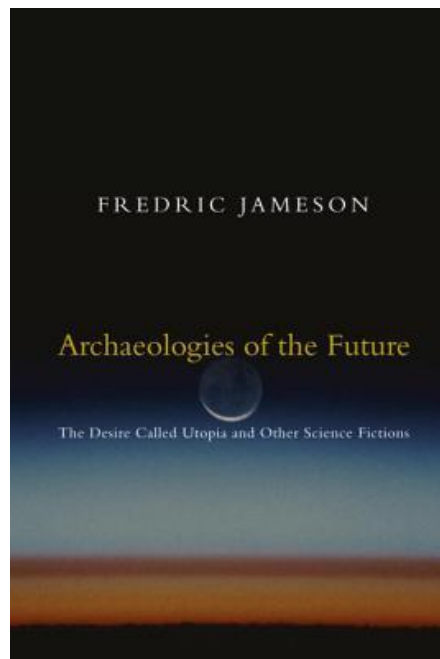




Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions

Fredric Jameson

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In an age of globalization characterized by the dizzying technologies of the First World and the social disintegration of the Third, is the concept of utopia still meaningful?

Archaeologies of the Future, Jameson's most substantial work since *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, investigates the development of this form since Thomas More, and interrogates the functions of utopian thinking in a post-Communist age.

The relationship between utopia and science fiction is explored through the representations of otherness - alien life and alien worlds - and a study of the works of Philip K. Dick, Ursula K. LeGuin, William Gibson, Brian Aldiss, Kim Stanley Robinson, and more.

Jameson's essential essays, including "The Desire Called Utopia," conclude with an examination of the opposing positions on utopia and an assessment of its political value today.

Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions Details

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From Reader Review Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions for online ebook

J. says

Eh. He wanders. A lot. And I guess I should be more accepting of that, but really he's all over the place. And in the context of Utopian studies, I imagine it all kind of makes sense, but the problem is that it really does seem like the science fiction and anti-utopian are just welded on here until the second part which, unfortunately, is mostly just rehashing the same things from earlier in the book. Get Freedman's "Science Fiction and Critical Theory" instead.

Zach says

Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity

Buell says

Jameson's book is comparable in stature and ambition to Georg Lukacs's *The Historical Novel*, which Jameson himself has dubbed the most significant volume of dialectical literary criticism. Jameson succeeds in doing for science fiction--particularly in its utopian form--what Lukacs did for the historical novel. *Archaeologies of the Future* is a major achievement of materialist critique.

Gregg Wingo says

A non-apologetist review of the science fiction genre through the eyes of America's leading postmodernist thinker. You will need to bring your knowledge of the Western Canon and contemporary philosophy with you in order to fully appreciate this text. Its division into books I and II enables regular science fiction readers to access straight forward reviews in Book II.

Expect to learn from this book and don't expect him to enshrine SF into the Western Canon but rather to provide you with an understanding of the zeitgeist of the history of the genre and ourselves. Authors reviewed range from Dick to Robinson, Brunner to Le Guin. With a focus on utopianism and dystopia the subjects covered are sex and society, aliens and psychoanalyst, and the motifs and mechanics of this writing field.

Jameson also remarks on the differences between hard science fiction and fantasy. He clearly traces the link between the utopian members of the Western Canon and the rise of science fiction's paraliterature, and the societal needs for these works and their roots in the human collective conscienceness. He also notes the limits of critical literature and the "drift" of high literature into the domain of science fiction in recent years as a result of our postmodern condition and the limits of critical literature to deal with the disassociative nature of the contemporary experience.

The reader will be left with an understanding of the genre, our times, and our historical basis. He or she will

also be perplexed as to how science fiction was replaced by fantasy as the popular literature of our times at the same moment it matured as a literary entity. One will also begin to understand how the internal dynamics of science fiction and its authors went from the popularizers of American modernism and imperialism to become the primary opponents of modernism in our times.

Be forewarned that Jameson does not see Marxism as a bad word but rather a critical tool for evaluating society.

Tineke Dijkstra says

Finished the sections of this work that I really wanted to read for now, but I am certainly not done with it and will return to this A LOT. What a great contribution to the secondary literature supporting my PhD research!

I disagreed with Jameson on some minor points (which is totally ok) and would've liked him to elaborate on certain issues more. However... Maybe not. That leaves room for me to do so!

4/5 stars because what always confuses me is why cultural theorists feel the need to explain things in a style that is harder to read than necessary - unfortunately, Jameson is no exception. Also, I didn't like the fact that he almost entirely left out gender and race issues - which both almost scream to be part of a project such as Jameson's.

I found Kyle A. Wiggin's review Futures of Negation: Jameson's Archaeologies of the Future and Utopian Science Fiction very helpful

Joe says

Bruising hermeneutic Marxism got no answers just diagrams and arrows. Easy to point out limitations of Jameson's approach, still, for someone thinking about the emergence of science fiction out of 17th century utopias and advances in...science,this provides a number of useful generic definitions and distinctions to work with and against. It also provides a defense of utopic literature to supplement Russell Jacoby's intellectually fuzzy one. Holy fuck Steph Curry is killing it.

Nicholas says

Pretty cool.

Rebecca says

One of the rare books that really merits the "amazing" mark. The book is difficult to read because the ideas are deeply explored, original and counter-intuitive in many cases. Jameson also draws on a huge range of philosophical and literary texts, and actually explains them fairly clearly. Unlike a lot of literary theory that

may rely on obscure language to express banal ideas, perform standard or moralistic ideological readings of narratives, /or congratulate itself for radicalism in some way, this book, like Jameson's earlier *The Political Unconscious* really offers startling and fresh readings of texts as well as a deep appreciation and consideration of literary forms.

Jesus says

Literary criticism in the form of a collection of essays, this book explores particular aspects of the genre of science fiction:

"Religion was perhaps the most ancient organizing concept in the emergence of anthropology as a discipline: the ultimately determining instance for national or racial character, the ultimate source of cultural difference itself, the marker of the individuality of the various peoples in history (a role it still plays in Hegel and whose revival today we can witness in ideologues like Samuel Huntington). It can thus provide the most facile solutions for SF, a kind of ready-made thought of the other; and at the same time stage the most interesting conceptual dilemmas and form-problems." (95)

Even footnotes are deep:

"(1) violence is an ideology, constructed around the structural omission of state power and physical oppression authorized by the 'law'; (2) violence is always initiated by the Right and by conservative or counterrevolutionary repression, to which Left violence is then a response; (3) political violence is self-defeating, and dialectically strengthens its opposite number: thus, US expansionism generates al Qaeda, whose growth then encourages the development of an American police state, which may well in turn suscitate new forms of resistance." (232)

Chapter 4 in part 2 is a neat place to begin.

Sofia Samatar says

Jameson is always readable, and offers some great insights on literary utopias. I found the essays in the beginning of the book more interesting than the literary analysis toward the end--I don't know why, I just didn't feel like I was getting anything really NEW on Le Guin, for example. What I liked most about the book is the way Jameson expresses his own ambivalence about treating sf in this high-academic fashion. It's not because he thinks sf isn't good enough; it's because he doesn't want it to get co-opted by academic criticism. Worth thinking about.

Scott Neigh says

Read partially for school. May go back and read it more thoroughly at some point, as there were some quite compelling bits, but not for the moment.

Chad Brock says

3.5

Michelle says

Brilliant novel, but very dense and difficult to follow if you're not plugged into the conversation already. Jameson's book speaks to a very specific audience, and if you are not part of that audience, prepare to be left in the dust.

flannery says

Super theoretical and dense! But if you can forgive the overuse of German phrases with no English equivalent this serves as a really good primer to some very exciting sci-fi! I can't wait to read (or watch the movie verison of) Solaris!
