



Forms of Attention: Botticelli and Hamlet (Wellek Library Lectures (Paperback))

Frank Kermode

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Sir Frank Kermode, the British scholar, instructor, and author, was an inspired critic. *Forms of Attention* is based on a series of three lectures he gave on canon formation, or how we choose what art to value. The essay on Botticelli traces the artist's sudden popularity in the nineteenth century for reasons that have more to do with poetry than painting. In the second essay, Kermode reads Hamlet from a very modern angle, offering a useful (and playful) perspective for a contemporary audience. The final essay is a defense of literary criticism as a process and conversation that, while often conflating knowledge with opinion, keeps us reading great art and working with—and for—literature.

“Kermode’s volume has the virtue of a lecturer’s accessible style designed for a listening audience. It is also self-consciously spare of ‘naked criticism.’ There is, nonetheless, an abundance of learned commentary, steady substance, and unveiled critical excellence. Which is to say the volume is a useful and engaging reflection of its learned author.”—*London Review of Books*

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