



# Pleasure and Change: The Aesthetics of Canon (The Berkeley Tanner Lectures)

*Frank Kermode*

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## **Pleasure and Change: The Aesthetics of Canon (The Berkeley Tanner Lectures)** Frank Kermode

The question of the canon has been the subject of debate in academic circles for over fifteen years. *Pleasure and Change* contains two lectures on this important subject by the distinguished literary critic Sir Frank Kermode. In essays that were originally delivered as Tanner Lectures at Berkeley in November of 2001, Kermode reinterprets the question of canon formation in light of two related and central notions: pleasure and change. He asks how aesthetic pleasure informs what we find valuable, and how this perception changes over time. Kermode also explores the role of chance, observing the connections between canon formation and unintentional and sometimes even random circumstance. Geoffrey Hartmann (Yale University), John Guillory (New York University), and Carey Perloff (director of the American Conservatory Theatre) offer incisive comments on these essays, to which Kermode responds in a lively rejoinder. The volume begins with a helpful introduction by Robert Alter. The result is a stimulating and accessible discussion of a highly significant cultural debate.

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