

Postmodernism and the Dance of the Dialectic: A Confrontation between Linda Hutcheon and Fredric Jameson

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ABSTRACT—*For postmodernism, reality is a construct rather than having anything natural about it. Following this, it believes that truth, meaning, history and human self have no essence of their own. On the contrary, they are governed by arbitrary cultural codes. Hutcheon endorses this view by saying that we have never known the real except through representations.*

Jameson seconds the view. For him, history always comes to us in textual form rather than being available there in a full representational way. However, he considers it only a partial view of things. According to him, such views – like everything is cultural – were not in vogue in the earlier stages of capitalism and have become dominant only in its contemporary form. Therefore, he wishes we view such things dialectically.

The paper chalks out a debate between the two writers highlighting how both of them are akin to each other in certain respects. Both believe that we should see postmodernism in its own right. However, the paper also seeks to show how Hutcheon’s ‘always-already’ view of reality is contained and rebutted by Jameson and vice-versa. Further, it attempts to show the various complications arising in this confrontation. Such complications have far reaching consequences on postmodern and Marxist cultural theory.