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Valences of the Dialectic

Fredric Jameson

Verso (2009)

Abstract

After half a century exploring dialectical thought, renowned cultural critic Fredric Jameson presents a comprehensive study of a misrepresented, vital strain in Western philosophy. The dialectic, the concept of the evolution of an idea through internal contradiction and conflict, transformed two centuries of Western philosophy. To Hegel, who dominated nineteenth-century thought, it was a metaphysical system. In the works of Marx, the dialectic became a tool for materialist historical analysis, a theoretical maneuver that his critics derided and his descendants on the Left have wrestled with ever since. Jameson brings a theoretical scrutiny to bear on the questions that have arisen in the history of this philosophical tradition, contextualizing the debate with essays on commodification and globalization, and with reference to the work of Rousseau, Fichte, Heidegger, Sartre, Derrida, and Lacan. Through rigorous, erudite examination, *Valences of the Dialectic* charts a movement toward the innovation of a "spatial" dialectic, culminating in a remarkable meditation on globalization, through a study of Paul Ricoeur. Jameson presents a new synthesis of thought that revitalizes dialectical thinking for the twenty-first century

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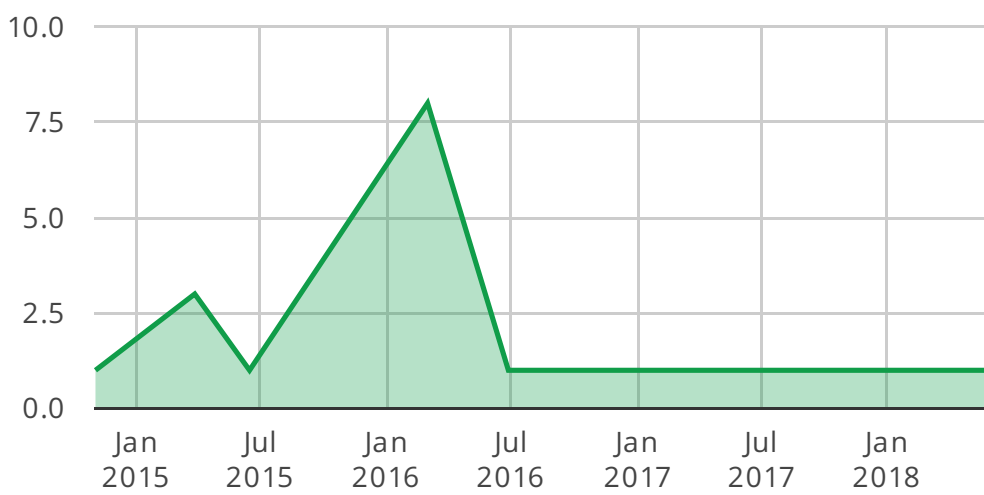
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