

# The Future of the Classical



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This is a terrific book - the fundamental statement we have long been hoping for, that confronts the European Classical heritage with the full complexity of its resonance in the age of globalization and postmodernity. It is brief, punchy and bright - very learned, but wearing its learning lightly, engaged, committed, always enthusiastic. Settis writes as a great authority immersed in the living Classical tradition, yet very sensitive to its swathe of receptions (art historical, architectural, poetic and historiographic, as well as literary). He leads us through a dazzling and hugely stimulating confrontation with the deep pasts and the futures of the Western tradition.

Salvatore Settis seeks a contemporary answer to Arnaldo Momigliano's question: why study ancient history? In this dynamic and urgent series of chapters, Settis considers the classical in a global setting. European culture is seen to be demarcated by its rhythmic returns to classical civilization as an "elsewhere" of both time and space. Settis places classicism under scrutiny as a cultural project, rather than revering it as an icon, and argues that, through the classical, myth is absorbed into history. The deep tradition of cycles of death and rebirth unique to European history offers rich opportunities for viewing the past as alien, and therefore capable of providing a wider understanding of "otherness." This provocative text takes nothing for granted.

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目录:

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