



Camera Obscura : Of Ideology

By Sarah Kofman

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Marx, Freud, Nietzsche?in vastly different ways all three employed the metaphor of the camera obscura in their work. In this classic book?at last available in an English translation?the distinguished French philosopher Sarah Kofman offers an extended reflection on this metaphor. She contrasts the mechanical function of the camera obscura as a kind of copy machine, rendering a mirror-image of the work, with its use in the writings of master thinkers. In her opening chapter on Marx, Kofman provides a reading of inversion as necessary to the ideological process. She then explores the metaphor of the camera obscura in Freud's description of the unconscious. For Nietzsche the camera obscura is a "metaphor for forgetting." Kofman asks here whether the "magical apparatus" of the camera obscura, rather than bringing about clarity, serves some thinkers as fetish. Camera Obscura is a powerful discussion of a metaphor that dominates contemporary theory from philosophy to film.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The first English translation of Camera Obscura, de l'ideology (originally published in Paris in 1973), Kofman discusses the use of the image of the camera obscura in the work of Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche. . . .Kofman provides an insightful look at Marx's use of the idea of inversion?as this is supposed to occur both in a camera obscura and in ideology. She interprets Marx to hold that religion is not only a form of ideology, but 'the form of every ideology.' Kofman draws useful connections among Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche, who all draw attention to something?ideology or the unconscious or perspective?as a powerful (but often unrecognized) part of human life."?Choice, November 1999, Vol. 37, No. 3

"Sarah Kofman's book is a focused and tightly argued discussion of the camera obscura-and the visual more generally-in learned and well-crafted essays that present a sustained critique of metaphor and ideologies. Her discussion of the omnipotent ocular is conducted in part to understand the role played by ideology and metaphor in warding off the horror of castration, in part to show that this same structure also functions as an ambiguous remedy."?Nicole Fermon, Fordham University

Language Notes

Text: English (translation)

Original Language: French

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Anthony Youngblood:

In this 21st centuries, people become competitive in every single way. By being competitive now, people have do something to make them survives, being in the middle of the actual crowded place and notice simply by surrounding. One thing that at times many people have underestimated the idea for a while is reading. Yep, by reading a reserve your ability to survive raise then having chance to stand than other is high. For you who want to start reading the book, we give you this specific Camera Obscura : Of Ideology book as starter and daily reading guide. Why, because this book is greater than just a book.

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