

Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative



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"Defacement" asks what happens when something precious is despoiled. It begins with the notion that such activity is attractive in its very repulsion, and that it creates something sacred even in the most secular of societies and circumstances. In specifying the human face as the ideal type for thinking through such violation, this book raises the issue of secrecy as the depth that seems to surface with the tearing of surface. This surfacing is made all the more subtle and ingenious, not to mention everyday, by the deliberately partial exposures involved in "the public secret"--defined as what is generally known but, for one reason or another, cannot easily be articulated. Arguing that this sort of knowledge ("knowing what not to know") is the most powerful form of social knowledge, Taussig works with ideas and motifs from Nietzsche, William Burroughs, Elias Canetti, Georges Bataille, and the ethnography of unmasking in so-called primitive societies in order to extend his earlier work on mimesis and transgression. Underlying his concern with defacement and the public secret is the search for a mode of truth telling that unmasks, but only to reenchant, thereby underlining Walter Benjamin's notion that "truth is not a matter of exposure of the secret, but a revelation that does justice to it."

作者介绍:

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slow clap at "the eye as a solar anus."

SOAN 330

行文太过于随意，很容易让人看了一大段艰涩的废话以后失去兴趣，但偶尔又出现妙语，总之断断续续看了近一个月，过程痛苦到我宁肯去读德里达。

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书评

Old topic, new vision not so anthropological, but a hybridity of social theory and philosophical ideas possibly skewed by several misreadings of Hegel and Nietzsche.

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