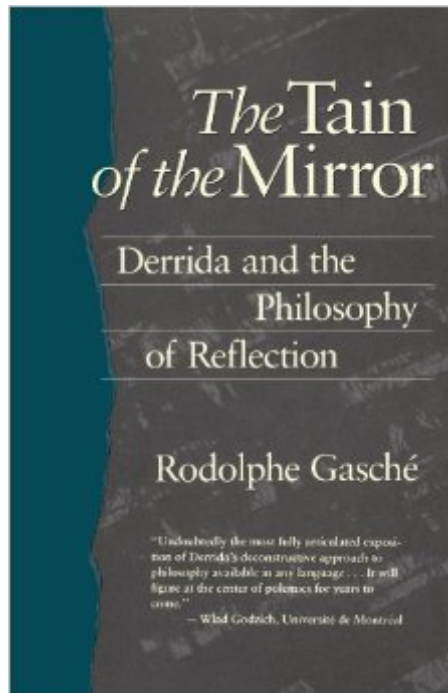


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The Tain Of The Mirror: Derrida And The Philosophy Of Reflection



Synopsis

Deconstruction is no game of mirrors, revealing the text as a play of surface against surface. Its more radical philosophical effort is to get behind the mirror and question the very nature of reflection. The Tain of the Mirror (tain names the tinfoil, or lusterless back of the mirror) explores that gritty surface without which no reflection would be possible. Gasche does what no one has done before in many discussions of Derrida, namely to tie his work in an authoritative way to its origins in the history of the criticism of reflexivity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It is discouraging to me that this book has been around for so long (published in 1988), and no one has deigned to review it here. Yes, just as the blurbs on the back of the book say, it is "challenging," and "formidable." But the silence is deafening on this work, and it is undeserved. This is a work in the tradition of Hyppolite's "Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology." That work turned the heads of the most inspired and inspiring young minds in its day to appreciate Hegel's accomplishment in opening up new domains of thought; Gasche's work does the same for Derrida. It takes a great philosophical mind to grasp the work of another great mind, and Gasche does just that. For those of us who must struggle to free ourselves from the academic drivel and dogma with which our philosophical training has inured us, bridges such as Hyppolite or Gasche offer are indispensable. There is a limit as to how far a writer can go in taking completely (and literally) ground-breaking thought and finding a sweet-spot of explication, and so Gasche cannot relate

Derrida's work to common, Kant-derived categories of knowledge-forming experiencing. He can only go as far back as Hegel, whose work he presents beautifully, and to notions of conceptual self-generation. Because the commonplace notions have reified concepts into "things in themselves," the idea that they are generated at all still escapes some; and then to venture (via Husserl and Heidegger) beyond a concept's supposed "existence" is a leap that is too far for some.

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