



Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses: A Particular Study of the Senses

Michael Taussig

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Taussig undertakes a history of the mimetic faculty. Using anthropological theory and the ideas of Benjamin, Adorno and Horkheimer the author analyses mimesis across time and cultures.

Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses: A Particular Study of the Senses Details

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From Reader Review Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses: A Particular Study of the Senses for online ebook

Nick says

It might be easier to just read the original source material than to try and pull any meaning out of this book.

Catherine says

There is no excuse for academic impenetrability.

David says

Although I rated this book as "I liked it," I think that in time I will come to feel that it is worthy of four or more stars.

Kathryn Yaste says

I read this for a college class (I think it was anthropology) and had forgotten about it until right now. I was reminded of it while browsing Amazon for another book with "Mimesis" in the title. What I remember about this book: it was dull and hard to understand. That's why I think I read it for my anthro class - the professor and everything he assigned us to do was dull and hard to understand.

Juv3nal says

Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses by Michael Taussig (1993)

Alexander Smith says

If for nothing else, this book is worth a read just for stylistic purposes. Taussig created a joy of a read from cover to cover! There is a lot in here to unpack for the person who really wants to understand it in its entirety. Although the goal of this book is not precisely the goal I had in mind when reading it. Still, I couldn't put this one down.

I didn't have enough time to fully unpack what was going on in the second half as what I wanted, but the particular notion of mimesis was pretty clear by the first 4 chapters, and by chapter 10 I had a brief idea of what it meant to step into "the other". In some ways this would compare excellently with Goffman's The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. Mimeses and Alterity is a materialist history of senses and speaks a lot

to identity if only by speaking about the Other while Goffman offers more of an anti-materialist social perspective. Also Goffman writes about people creating their identities through staging and acting out roles via Dramaturgy while Taussig writes about borrowing the Other identity for control and understanding.

For my particular use, Taussig spends a great deal of time synthesizing ethnographies and speaking about how many ethnographies seem to just barely miss on the particular social goals (maybe even social requirement) of mimesis for history to occur and uses a good bit of Critical Theorist and material Marxist, Walter Benjamin's work in order to explain the theoretical usefulness of mimesis. However in my particular use, this is a great materialist perspective to explain social network behaviors. There are entire sections in here that more than accurately and even poetically describe the acts of memeing and trolling and how a society might find this useful.

Az says

Taussig, poet, Benjamin head, delicious.

Rebecca says

This book is so mesmerizing...but I can never read it cover to cover, only bits at a time. It's about how we make mimetic objects and how they in turn, make us...

Caley says

I read the first 150 pages or so and the last 20. Frankly, I couldn't get past Taussig's self-described "roundabout" way of writing. Many sections were fuzzy logic-wise and he enjoyed making huge jumps from one argument to the next. I liked the opening section on Benjamin and mimesis, but he abandoned this whole train of thought once he went focused on his discussion of the Cuna people. Unnecessarily repetitive in parts and oftentimes incredibly colloquial, which detracted from his arguments that at times, had great potential. Wouldn't recommend.

Rachel says

All right, so this is "official" reading, so it shouldn't be here (per my own, arbitrary rules), but I'm actually kind of enjoying it. Which is so strange and refreshing. Of course, I'm doing this now in order to procrastinate from reading it, so...

Runa says

Absolutely fabulous premise - the crossover between mimesis, alterity, sympathetic magic, the senses, modernity and colonialism. Sadly it is way too absorbed by its own little clever moments, which completely

sucks that fabulousness out of the entire book.

Illustrative excerpt:

"Mine is an old-fashioned interest in magic, but applied to fashion itself."

Except, of course, there is nothing in this book that could be literally described as 'fashion'.

Tara Bianca says

tried to read and would like to pick it up again.
