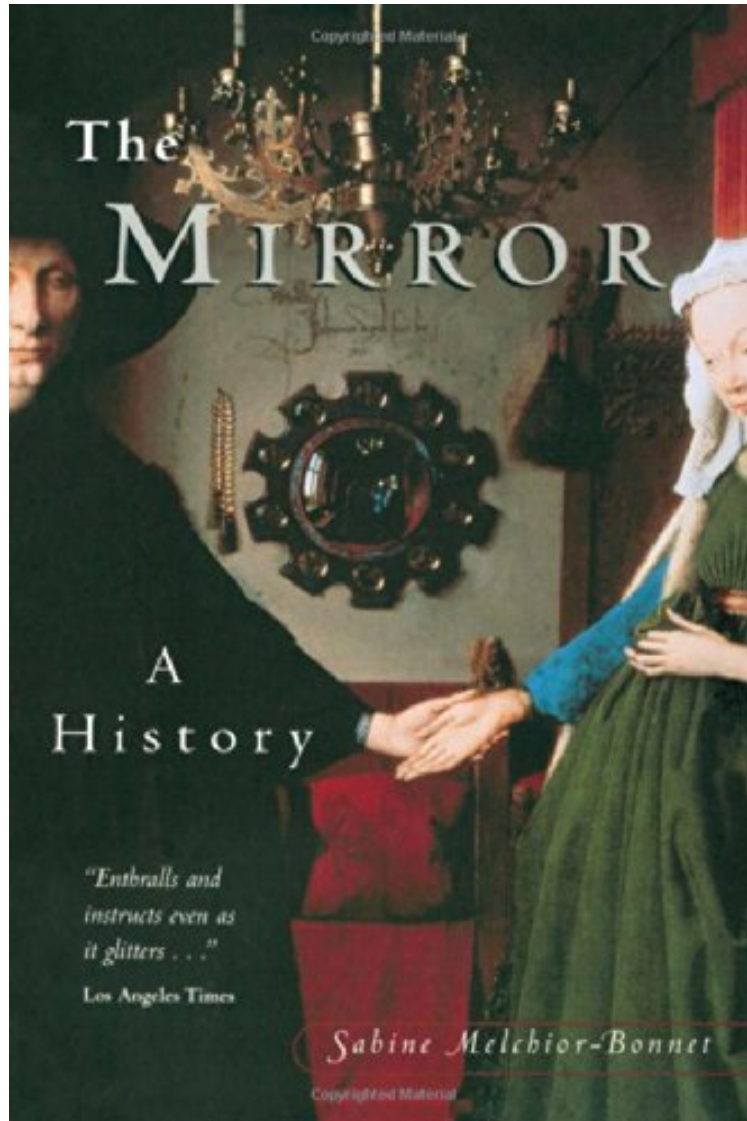


(Free) The Mirror: A History

The Mirror: A History

Sabine Melchoir-Bonnet

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Sabine Melchoir-Bonnet : The Mirror: A History before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Mirror: A History:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A deep look into humanityBy David C. C. MatthewThe first half of this wonderful short book is about art and mirrors, very insightful on both topics. The second half is a treasure of the philosophy, religious impact, and, over all, the psychology of mirrors. It will have you thinking and re-reading for a long time1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Gem of deep colorBy Sunny SageFor anyone given to

introspection, this is a gem. It exposes places in the heart by sourced authors from centuries ago, when human nature was far more commonly understood than it is today. The corporate rivalries in seventeenth century Europe are of interest if only to show that commerce flourished without the gasoline engine, air freight, UPS, or asphalt roads. And rivalries the size of Microsoft/Apple are not new. I enjoyed this book immensely. 16 of 17 people found the following review helpful. A history of the mirror in France By Pat Lamken Even though mirrors are a commonplace of everyday life and an essential part of modern technology, surprisingly little has been written about them, making this charming little book a welcome addition. It might more accurately have been subtitled "A history of the mirror in France" since it concentrates almost exclusively on that country. Subjects include the manufacture of mirrors, their use in decoration, art, literature, theology, and most especially their psychological effect on self-image - and of course their erotic implications. The author says virtually nothing about optics or technology, and the illustrations are few and poorly done. This is not a must-have book, but if you are interested in mirrors, French culture, or cultural history, it is worth reading, and would be an appropriate gift for the mirror-obsessed individual in your family.

This engaging and witty cultural history traces the evolution of the mirror from antiquity to the present day, illustrating its journey from wondrous object to ordinary trinket. With its earliest invention, the mirror allowed us to gaze upon ourselves, bestowing a power both fascinating and terrifying.

From Publishers Weekly Tool of the devil, luxury item, optical device, decorative accessory, humble grooming aid The mirror, so commonplace today, has meant many things through the ages. This erudite meditation on the development and marketing of the mirror, and on its social and psychological implications, reveals how significantly the mirror has influenced Western culture. In its capacity both to reflect and to distort, to reproduce and to fragment, the mirror profoundly changed both notions of physical space and ideas of the self. Medieval thinkers feared the mirror's power to distort and to provoke pride and vanity; later, the looking glass was considered an aid for reaching self-knowledge. At the Court of Louis XV at Versailles, mirrors made social life "a theater of reflection and artifice"; by the 18th century, "the utopia of transparency helped to foster the birth of an egalitarian ideology." Mirrors opened up dark interiors, revealing hidden and sometimes troubling points of view, enabled artists to create self-portraits and confronted individuals with modern questions of self and image. Drawing on history, philosophy, theology, art, psychology and literature, Melchoir-Bonnet establishes the mirror's central contribution to visual culture. Her decision to organize her material thematically rather than chronologically sometimes compromises the clarity of her presentation, which will appeal most readily to those with a solid background in European history and thought. Nevertheless, this beautifully illustrated study offers so many intriguing glimpses into the meanings of reflection that it will reward anyone who peers beneath its surface. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Imagine life without mirrors. It wasn't long ago that only the wealthy could check their appearances, Melchoir-Bonnet explains in this brisk, surprising, and enjoyable history. She describes the small and precious polished stone and metal mirrors of antiquity and the crafting of the first sizable glass mirrors in sixteenth-century Venice, where a mirror cost nearly three times as much as a painting by Raphael. Mirrors quickly became all the rage among European nobility, and Melchoir-Bonnet relates some amazing tales of industrial espionage and skullduggery associated with France's effort to establish its own mirror-making factories to meet the decadent demands of Louis XIV. Melchoir-Bonnet also explores the profound symbolism associated with the looking glass in a richly metaphorical inquiry that illuminates the realms of religion, magic, philosophy, literature, art, and science. Socrates encouraged people to learn from what they saw in the mirror; the church warned against vanity and lasciviousness; while writers and artists celebrated beauty even as they pondered the pitfalls of illusion and the valuing of image over substance. Donna Seaman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "An engagingly written work, well worth reading." -Choice, January 2002 "Sabine Melchior-Bonnet has taken a reflective piece of glass and turned it into a unique historical treatise." -AP, 4/16/01 "After reading Sabine Melchior-Bonnet's sociohistorical study of the mirror, however, we may never look at ourselves the same way again. "The Mirror: A History painstakingly researched book explores the production of mirrors . . . Melchior-Bonnet's research-rigorous and vast-reveals much about our most carnal selves, our lust for control over our image, and our most lofty spiritual aspirations." -National Financial Post "Presents such facts with erudite relish. The early chapters of "The Mirror are a feast of technological information and curious details of European social history. . . Ms. Melchior-Bonnet is most animated when she is deconstructing such symbols . . . In any case, Ms. Melchior-Bonnet clearly presents the questions of illusion and reality that continue to beguile anyone who stops to think seriously about mirrors and our behavior in their presence." -Wall Street Journal ""The Mirror is an amusing jewel of a book, a sparkling reflection of the history of the mirror in Europe, and the role of the mirror in European imagination. Sabine Melchoir-Bonnet moves elegantly from the techniques of creating mirrors to their role in fashion, art, philosophy, the occult and religion . . . One also senses this spookiness in that chilling fairy tale question, "Mirror, Mirror on the wall/Who's the fairest one of all?" Such cultural echoes seem endless in Melchoir Bonnet's "The Mirror," which enthralls and instructs even as it glitters." -Los Angeles Times,

March9, 2001