



# The Severed Head: Capital Visions (European Perspectives: A Series in Social Thought and Cultural Criticism)

By Julia Kristeva

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## The Severed Head: Capital Visions (European Perspectives: A Series in Social Thought and Cultural Criticism) By Julia Kristeva

Informed by a provocative exhibition at the Louvre curated by the author, *The Severed Head* unpacks artistic representations of severed heads from the Paleolithic period to the present. Surveying paintings, sculptures, and drawings, Julia Kristeva turns her famed critical eye to a study of the head as symbol and metaphor, as religious object and physical fact, further developing a critical theme in her work--*the power of horror*--and the potential for the face to provide an experience of the sacred.

Kristeva considers the head as icon, artifact, and locus of thought, seeking a keener understanding of the violence and desire that drives us to sever, and in some cases keep, such a potent object. Her study stretches all the way back to 6,000 B.C.E., with humans' early decoration and worship of skulls, and follows with the Medusa myth; the mandylion of Laon (a holy relic in which the face of a saint appears on a piece of cloth); the biblical story of John the Baptist and his counterpart, Salome; tales of the guillotine; modern murder mysteries; and even the rhetoric surrounding the fight for and against capital punishment. Kristeva interprets these "capital visions" through the lens of psychoanalysis, drawing infinite connections between their manifestation and sacred experience and very much affirming the possibility of the sacred, even in an era of "faceless" interaction.

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## Editorial Review

### Review

Through her wonder and her doubt Kristeva sets forth a compelling account of the sacred and of the intimate visionary capacity of the human soul.

(Joshua Paetkau *The Ecclesial University Blog*)

The Severed Head is a reminder that art can be the best teacher, particularly when the topic is an uncomfortable one.

(Patricia Contino *New Pages.com*)

This beautifully written and richly layered meditation on mortality and representation will undoubtedly appeal to those readers interested in semiotic and psychoanalytically informed readings of art.

(Jonathan Patkowski *Library Journal XPress Reviews*)

*The Severed Head* considers a remarkable range of representations of the severed head in art historical, religious and mythological contexts.

(*TLS*)

### Review

Julia Kristeva was invited to curate an exhibit at the Louvre--an exhibit with a point of view. A smart idea. The result: this extraordinary reflection on the severed head, Medusa, John the Baptist, Judith and Holofernes especially, and the guillotine. The powers of horror that engage Kristeva in this book ultimately lead us beyond abjection to a meditation on representation and the sacred. It is an original and powerful narrative.

(Peter Brooks, professor of comparative literature, Princeton University, and author of *Enigmas of Identity*)

### About the Author

Julia Kristeva is professor of linguistics at the Université de Paris VII and author of many acclaimed works and novels, including *This Incredible Need to Believe*, *Melanie Klein*, *Hannah Arendt*, *Possessions*, *Time and Sense*, *New Maladies of the Soul*, *Strangers to Ourselves*, and *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. She is the recipient of the Hannah Arendt Prize for Political Thought and the Holberg International Memorial Prize.

Jody Gladding is a poet who has translated more than twenty works from French.

## **Users Review**

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Information is provisions for individuals to get better life, information currently can get by anyone on everywhere. The information can be a understanding or any news even a huge concern. What people must be consider if those information which is from the former life are hard to be find than now's taking seriously which one would work to believe or which one the resource are convinced. If you have the unstable resource then you obtain it as your main information you will see huge disadvantage for you. All those possibilities will not happen with you if you take The Severed Head: Capital Visions (European Perspectives: A Series in Social Thought and Cultural Criticism) as your daily resource information.

#### **Fred Ashman:**

A lot of people always spent their own free time to vacation or even go to the outside with them family members or their friend. Are you aware? Many a lot of people spent they free time just watching TV, or maybe playing video games all day long. In order to try to find a new activity here is look different you can read the book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book you read you can spent all day every day to reading a reserve. The book The Severed Head: Capital Visions (European Perspectives: A Series in Social Thought and Cultural Criticism) it is quite good to read. There are a lot of folks that recommended this book. They were enjoying reading this book. In the event you did not have enough space to deliver this book you can buy typically the e-book. You can m0ore effortlessly to read this book from the smart phone. The price is not too expensive but this book offers high quality.

#### **Lois Wiggins:**

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#### **Lorene Williamson:**

Many people said that they feel uninterested when they reading a guide. They are directly felt the item when they get a half portions of the book. You can choose the particular book The Severed Head: Capital Visions (European Perspectives: A Series in Social Thought and Cultural Criticism) to make your own reading is interesting. Your own skill of reading skill is developing when you similar to reading. Try to choose very simple book to make you enjoy to study it and mingle the idea about book and examining especially. It is to be very first opinion for you to like to start a book and examine it. Beside that the guide The Severed Head: Capital Visions (European Perspectives: A Series in Social Thought and Cultural Criticism) can to be a

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