

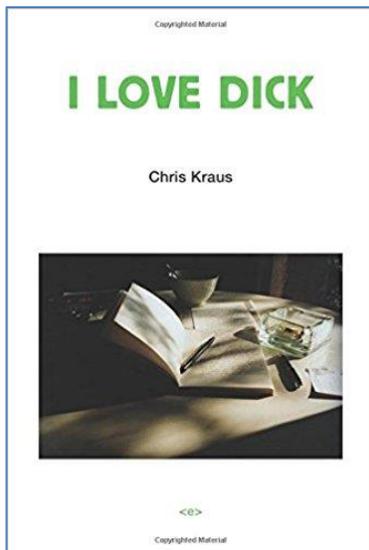
Spotlight

Friday, February 9, 2018

Just in time for Valentine's Day I present to you a genre bending feminist pseudo-memoir on the topic of marriage, desire, divorce, and obsession. Chris Kraus' semi-fictional memoir, *I Love Dick*, was published in 1997 on her husband, Sylvère Lotringer's, publishing company Semiotext(e) to mixed reviews. At once raw and confessional the book is also deeply philosophical and political. *I Love Dick* is composed of two parts; the first chronicles the disintegration of a marriage at the hands of the wife's infatuation turned obsession with a mutual acquaintance of the couple, a solitary art critic named Dick. After a fateful meeting (to her) and a forgettable one (to him, Dick) the protagonist and author Chris Kraus is thrown into the reveries of romantic bliss and torture as she contemplates how to proceed with this reignited passion in her life. Her quiet and companionable marriage has become dull and together with her husband (both in the book and in real life) she begins a project of penning letters to Dick in an attempt to come to terms with their marriage and Chris' feelings. The letters quickly become all-consuming and in separate and joint one-sided correspondences with Dick, Chris and Sylvère battle with ideas of fidelity, trust, desire, and love.

By the second half of the book, Chris has left Sylvère. Together and apart they continue to write Dick who grows increasingly out of focus as he distances himself from the pair amidst some knowledge of their project concerning him. Chris' letters become increasingly intimate, pained, and revelatory the more Dick pulls away from her and treats her with contempt. It is here where the novel/memoir reaches its peak and exposes its brilliance. Using her complicated and contentious relationship with Dick, the object of her affection, and Sylvère, a symbol of

both comfort and control, Kraus exposes the competing values at the heart of romantic attraction and attachment. At the same time, she confronts the enduring problem of female autonomy in heterosexual relationships. That and the whole thing is just a gloriously written train wreck from which you can't turn away.



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