



Sublime Dreams of Living Machines

Minsoo Kang

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Kang's central contention is that the automaton, a machine that can move by itself (better known today as the robot), is one of the essential ideas with which people in the West have pondered the very nature of humanity itself. In Kang's telling, automata are mirrors of the ideas, fears, and anxieties of a given era, in that attitudes towards the machines have always been indicative of a moment's zeitgeist. The book is historically sweeping, but not comprehensive; the focus is on what Kang takes to be key changes in the representations of and responses to automata. His main interest is on how Europeans in different periods of the past thought about the very notion of a self-moving machine that acted as if it were alive and how they used it for various symbolic and intellectual purposes.



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