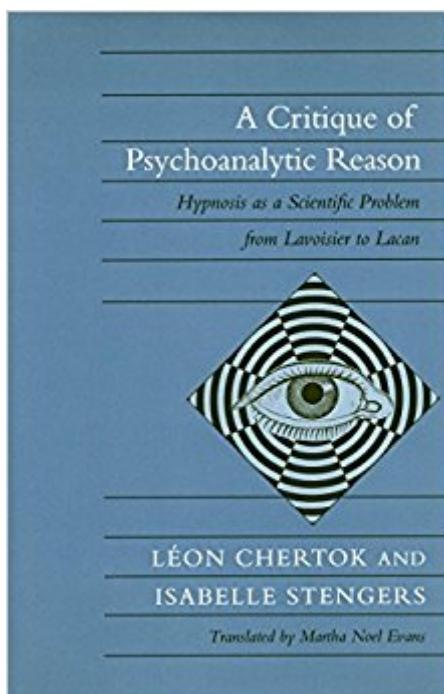


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A Critique Of Psychoanalytic Reason: Hypnosis As A Scientific Problem From Lavoisier To Lacan



Synopsis

This original and provocative work begins by examining the shift of scientific paradigms that took place in the late eighteenth century, a shift illustrated by the report of a French Royal Commission appointed in 1784 to investigate Mesmerism. The reactions to Mesmerism among the Commission members - in particular the chemist Lavoisier and the botanist Jussieu - crystallized conflicts about the notion of reason and its role as a scientific ideal, about how science ought to be done. The Commission's denunciation of Mesmerism as the work of the 'immigration' then serves as the starting point for the authors' reconsideration of the history of psychoanalysis, notably its suppression and repression of phenomena associated with hypnosis - imagination, suggestion, and empathy - in its search to establish itself as a science in accord with the new ideal of scientific reason. Examining the new and often troubled relationship in psychoanalysis between therapeutic effectiveness and advances in theory, the authors highlight the challenge to Freudian ideals in the 1920's by Otto Rank and Sandor Ferenczi.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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The book sheds light on hypnosis, the history of ideas, and the epistemological conflict of heart and reason, clarifying what we audaciously call depth psychology. The authors discuss Copernicus and Galileo, Kant and Pierre Janet, Michael Balint and Jacques Lacan. The text is dense but worth all

the effort it takes to finish. I reviewed this book along with Alan Gauld's "A History of Hypnotism" (also 1992) in "Bulletin of the History of Medicine" 68: 323-331, 1994.

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