

Lost in Cognition: Psychoanalysis and the Cognitive Sciences

Éric Laurent

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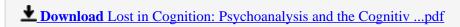
Éric Laurent

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This book examines the pretensions of the new paradigm in psychology that has put itself forward as the model for the future of the clinical disciplines, thereby seeking to put paid to psychoanalysis. What is this paradigm shift? It goes by the name of cognitive-behaviorism. Where does it come from? From the United States.

Until the nineteen-sixties, behavioral psychology had enjoyed a certain prestige in the US. It was later disqualified by the objections from the linguist Noam Chomsky who held that no learning procedure could ever account for linguistic ability. This ability was surely innate, Chomsky argued, and so he set about hunting out the organ of language. Behavior had to be complemented by a *machine for taking cognisance*, a machine that was innate and which conformed to the post-Chomskyan model. It took the discipline some thirty years to deck itself out in new clothes. The advances in biology, in neurology, and in the nebula that resulted from them under the neuroscience label, oversaw this change. Under the name of behavioral-cognitivism, a new reduction of human experience to learning has emerged.

Based on the psychoanalysis of Lacanian orientation, this book upholds an opposing thesis. The unconscious does not fall into the "learning" category. It is what is *missing from or surplus to* any possible learning process. It a mode of thought that is free from both learning and consciousness, and this is what is at once odd and scandalous about it.



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