

data and the underlying social-psychological theory have not—as a unit—won an adequate response.” See *Weber, Irrationality, and Social Order* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), p. 158.

11. Scaff offers particularly good additional material on Weber's view of capitalism and the German bourgeoisie in many places—e.g., pp. 26, 59, 67ff., 84, 87ff., etc.

12. For a brilliant account of this and many other aspects of Weber's political views, see Robert Eden, *Political Leadership and Nihilism: A Study of Weber and Nietzsche* (Tampa: University Presses of Florida, 1984). Scaff refers to Eden's book once, Goldman not at all.

13. In my opinion, the passages Goldman cites from Weber to support these far-reaching claims (such as those, e.g., on pp. 145, 147, 154, 158, and 162) do not in fact confirm his interpretation of Weber's views. (Interested readers may want to judge the merits of the case for themselves.) A good part of the problem here is that, though Goldman deserves credit for devoting part of Chapter 4 to a review of arguments presented in Weber's studies of the world religions, his reading of these studies is highly selective and (I think) injudicious. These are among the most important of Weber's texts, and they merit considerably more detailed investigation than Goldman gives them.

14. Elsewhere, Goldman repeats that, for Weber, a rational this-worldly ethical personality “is the unique achievement of the West and was not possible (!) anywhere else for a variety of reasons” (146).

15. Goldman unites his claims into a single statement when he credits ascetic Puritan innovators with exclusive title to Weberian personality: “For Weber, despite the many forms of self-shaping manifested in the various religious cultures of the world, the Puritan ‘transformation of self’ was unique in its capacity to structure a special kind of personality, or, as he sometimes suggests, the *only* kind of personality: formed from the subjugation and unification of self under the dominance of a higher value, usually sacred or divine. Yet it is not only this unity that is notable for Weber but also its mobilization in the direction of sanctified or ‘pious’ action undertaken as the fruits of a rational methodical service of a higher value. Historically this mobilization has been able to initiate change and overcome the weight and resistance of tradition in economics and politics. Though there are individual examples of such action throughout history, such an ethos is only possible in a wide-spread, sustained, and consistent way, in Weber's view, in the modern Western world, that is, the world after the Reformation. This ethos contrasts not only with the ethos of Catholicism and the other Western religions but also with the ethos of the now-displaced aristocracy . . .” (148–149).

16. See David C. McClelland, *The Achieving Society* (Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, 1961), p. 47. This remarkable work, which has been little noticed by Weber specialists, takes Weber's conception of this “new character type” as the basis for the “key hypothesis” of a remarkable battery of studies, presented under the general rubric “The Effects of the Protestant Reformation on n Achievement” (i.e., “need for achievement”). McClelland's grasp of Weber is exemplary and his research is impressively wide-ranging and imaginative; it has yet to be fully assimilated by sociological theorists. See pp 46 ff. and 391 ff. in particular.

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**Alan Gauld.** *A History of Hypnotism*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 1992. 738 pp. (cloth) (Reviewed by Anne Harrington)

There is a kind of old-fashioned integrity and scrupulousness to a book that takes over 700 pages to survey some two hundred years of the “phenomena, theory and practice of hypnotism,” while eschewing any forays (with very occasional exceptions) into all “larger questions” about the social, cultural and political meanings of the explosion of ideas and practices that have gone on under the names of “mesmerism,” “animal magnetism,” and “hypnotism” (though Gauld does not deny that such questions may rightly be asked). This is a book in a very different tradition than, say, Darnton's early provocative social history, *Mesmerism and the End of the Enlightenment in France*.<sup>1</sup> In reflecting on Gauld's scholarly accomplishment with this book, I thought of such nineteenth-century grand panoramas of changing medical ideas as Jules Soury's 1899 *Le système nerveux central*,<sup>2</sup> and Max Neuburger's 1897 *Die historische Entwicklung*

*der experimentellen Gehirn- und Rückenmarksphysiologie vor Flourens*.<sup>3</sup> It is true that Gauld's *History* differs from those books by carving the domain of its subject matter along somewhat more generous lines. Nonetheless, like those great early classics, this is a book primarily written by a scientist for other scientists.

The basic historiographic approach taken by this book is to see the present as located in a broader progressive trajectory which, if it is not quite a straight slope upwards, nevertheless *does* track a process whereby scientific wheat is slowly shaken free from the mystical chaff. The scientific and medical community will probably appreciate Gauld's periodic headshaking about the "naiveté" and "uncritical" approach of many earlier explorers, and share his frustration that so many of the remarkable cures and phenomena reported cannot be assessed because early researchers failed to take even minimal experimental and procedural precautions. The fact that Gauld could introduce a section on "hallucination and illusions of sense" (444) by declaring that "the literature on these topics was very considerable, but surprisingly little of it has to do with what is *obviously the central [scientific] question*; namely that of the degree of subjective reality which such hallucinations and illusions possess for the experient" [italics added] will not trouble those for whom the past is a laboratory of both useful and failed experiments, to be variously rejected or incorporated into our current corpus of knowledge. However, these and similar comments are likely to have an alienating effect on historians for whom the cardinal principle of historical research is to understand the logic of practices, ideas, and "central questions" at any particular time and place on its own terms; and according to its own standards; not as judged by standards and "central questions" that developed in a different time and place.

An irony in Gauld's no-nonsense, "scientist" approach to his material is the extent to which it stands in clear tension with the ideological thrust of so much of his material itself. Even a cursory read through his story makes clear that much of the history of mesmerism and hypnosis has been about pushing the envelope of rational Enlightenment views of reality and the human mind, and celebrating a whole panoply of exotic, extrasensory and mystical phenomena and ideas. It is a pity that Gauld's historiography allows him to do no more than describe and, occasionally, deplore all these "extravagances." It cannot lead him to ask whether this persistent strain of paranormality and exoticism in his story—how it functioned, what its forms were, whom it engaged—might actually be one of the "central *historical* questions" to ask of his material, whatever scientific psychology of the 1990s might think of it.

Gauld begins his story conventionally with the life and work of Anton Mesmer, the battle of the Royal Commissions over the reality of his purported animal magnetism, and the "discovery" of artificial somnambulism or the "perfect crisis" by Mesmer's disciple, the Marquis de Puységur. Things spread out after that, and we move across France, Germany, Britain and the United States, tracking themes, personalities and innovations. By the mid-nineteenth-century, "mesmerism" is declining and "hypnosis" is on the uprise, and a new panoply of figures emerge: Charles Richet, Jean-Martin Charcot, Hippolyte Bernheim, and Pierre Janet, to name only the most prominent. The book continues to pursue threads, publications and personalities only up through the first decades of this century (when interest in hypnosis went into decline), though there is a brief chapter reviewing the current state of experimental research and theory on the topic. Gauld then takes the rather unusual step of choosing to conclude his book, not with an analysis of the historical patterns and intellectual or practice-based relationships he has just reviewed, but with an attempt to decide what history has taught us



about hypnosis in its own right, and whether science is now in a position to develop "a new way of looking at hypnotic phenomena" that avoids the extremes and pitfalls of earlier theories. He positions himself here between the "statists," most of whom come out of clinical traditions (and who believe that hypnosis is a special state of consciousness, probably with associated physiological changes) and the anti-statists, most of whom come out of social psychology traditions (and who argue that "hypnosis" as such does not exist, since all the phenomena attributed to it can be produced in waking subjects through the force of imperative suggestion). Gauld is prepared to agree with the social psychologists that there is nothing to hypnosis beyond what people think there is, but he insists that *ideas* about hypnosis can have "real" and non-trivial psychological and physiological effects. In his words:

*N/um*, the boiling energy of the !Kung bushmen, does not exist. It is imaginary, or at best metaphorical. It works, produces felt effects and genuine benefits, not because it is really there, but because those educated into bushman culture believe that it is or might be. It fits into an institutionalized set of concepts which they all share, and which influences the "penetrable" aspects of their cognitive functionings. "Hypnosis" too does not exist, at least in the strong traditional sense. . . . But the concept of hypnosis in which the majority of hypnotic subjects in our society participate may likewise have powerful effects on the minds and behaviour of some among those who possess it. . . . [T]hough the concept of hypnosis . . . may be an artefact, corresponding to no reality it has not itself engendered, the elements of the concept are not all . . . derived from folk-superstitions, socially inculcated practices, etc. Some are genuine in the sense that the phenomena in question occur independently of whether or not the persons . . . know anything about them. . . . [This fact] has helped to give hypnosis as a concept and a set of practices its durability and also its powerful and suggestibility enhancing influence on the minds of those about to be hypnotized (629).

Gauld's *History* is a hard book to read from cover to cover; it lacks the strong narrative thread and fine sense of person, place and atmosphere achieved, for example, by Henri Ellenberger in his momentous 1970 *Discovery of the Unconscious*.<sup>4</sup> Professional historians of the behavioral sciences will be much less excited than psychologists and medical professionals about its presentist approach to the past, and all the assumptions this approach begs. Still, Gauld has put a staggering amount of material between two covers, and provided enough suggestive leads and references to inspire even researchers with an appetite for more ambitious historiographic agendas. While there is still much work to be done before I will be satisfied that the definitive history of hypnosis has been written, Gauld's *History* will, in the interim, remain a very valuable book to have handy on one's self.

#### NOTES

1. R. Darnton, *Mesmer and the End of the Enlightenment in France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968).
2. Jules Soury, *Le système nerveux central, Structure et fonctions. Histoire critique des théories et des doctrines* (Paris: George Carré et C. Naud, 1898).
3. Max Neuburger, *Die historische Entwicklung der experimentellen Gehirn- und Rückenmarksphysiologie vor Flourens* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke Verlag, 1897).
4. Henri Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (NY: Basic Books, 1970).

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