



Psychoanalysis in Focus (Counselling & Psychotherapy in Focus Series)

David Livingstone Smith

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`This is a thought provoking and passionately argued book, it is recommended as a thought provoking introduction to some of the key debates' - Journal of Analytical Psychology. `Psychoanalysis in Focus provides an excellent introduction to the basic problems besetting psychoanalytic theory and practice. David Livingstone Smith's lucid survey of the major strands of the critical debate about psychoanalysis fills an important gap in the literature of a discipline not renowned for examining its own shortcomings at a fundamental level' - Allen Esterson, Author of Seductive Mirage: An Exploration of the Work of Sigmund Freud (Open Court Publishing, 1994). `David Livingstone Smith's clearly reasoned iconoclastic account convincingly demonstrates the illusory, quasi-religious status of psychoanalysis unsupported as it currently is by any objective evidence to underwrite the vast bulk of its propositions. If it is to ask meaningful questions about the human mind and find ways to answer them, it will need to evolve into an interdisciplinary science and thereby create links with evolutionary biology, anthropology, cognitive psychology, neuroscience and linguistics' - Ann Casement, Analytical Psychologist, Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute, Author of Carl Gustav Jung (SAGE Publications 2001). `No responsible practitioner or scholar of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy can ignore this intellectually outstanding and grittily honest book. David Livingstone Smith brings together many of the themes that he has done so much to place on the agenda of contemporary psychoanalysis: the philosophical and scientific standing of the discipline; the nuanced impact of developments in related research fields; the oft-neglected role of the analyst in terms of communication between analyst and patient. What impresses me is the way in which Smith functions both as an educator, helping the reader to understand the significance of the challenges psychoanalysis faces, and also as a major protagonist in the debates inspired by those challenges' - Professor Andrew Samuels, University of Essex and Goldsmith's College, University of London. Psychoanalysis in Focus is a much-needed introduction to the major criticisms of psychoanalysis as a theory and as a practice. The book encourages psychoanalysts, psychotherapists and counsellors to adopt a more balanced view of their own discipline and aims to help students engage in critical debate during their training. Outlining the main criticisms from outside the world of psychotherapy, David Livingstone Smith explores the contentions of philosophers such as Karl Popper and Adolf Gr[um]unbaum. He assesses the scientific credibility of psychoanalysis, explaining the difficulty in obtaining evidence, using the experimental methods of research favoured by the scientific community. Against this he sets the opposing view that psychoanalysis is not, and should not strive to be, a science and highlights the philosophical and ethical shortcomings which accompany this view. The book also examines the contemporary issues facing practitioners and the validity of key psychoanalytic concepts such as the unconscious, free association, transference and countertransference. The future of psychoanalysis depends on the ability of practitioners to analyze its flaws and to answer its critics. Psychoanalysis in Focus provides a highly readable and accessible introduction which will help trainees and practitioners grasp the key debates.

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