



The Mimetic Brain (Studies in Violence, Mimesis, & Culture)

Jean-Michel Oughourlian

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The discovery of mirror neurons in the 1990s led to an explosion of research and debate about the imitative capacities of the human brain. Some herald a paradigm shift on the order of DNA in biology, while others remain skeptical. In this revolutionary volume Jean-Michel Oughourlian shows how the hypotheses of René Girard can be combined with the insights of neuroscientists to shed new light on the “mimetic brain.”

Offering up clinical studies and a complete reevaluation of classical psychiatry, Oughourlian explores the interaction among reason, emotions, and imitation and reveals that rivalry—the blind spot in contemporary neuroscientific understandings of imitation—is a misunderstood driving force behind mental illness. Oughourlian’s analyses shake the very foundations of psychiatry as we know it and open up new avenues for both theoretical research and clinical practice.

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