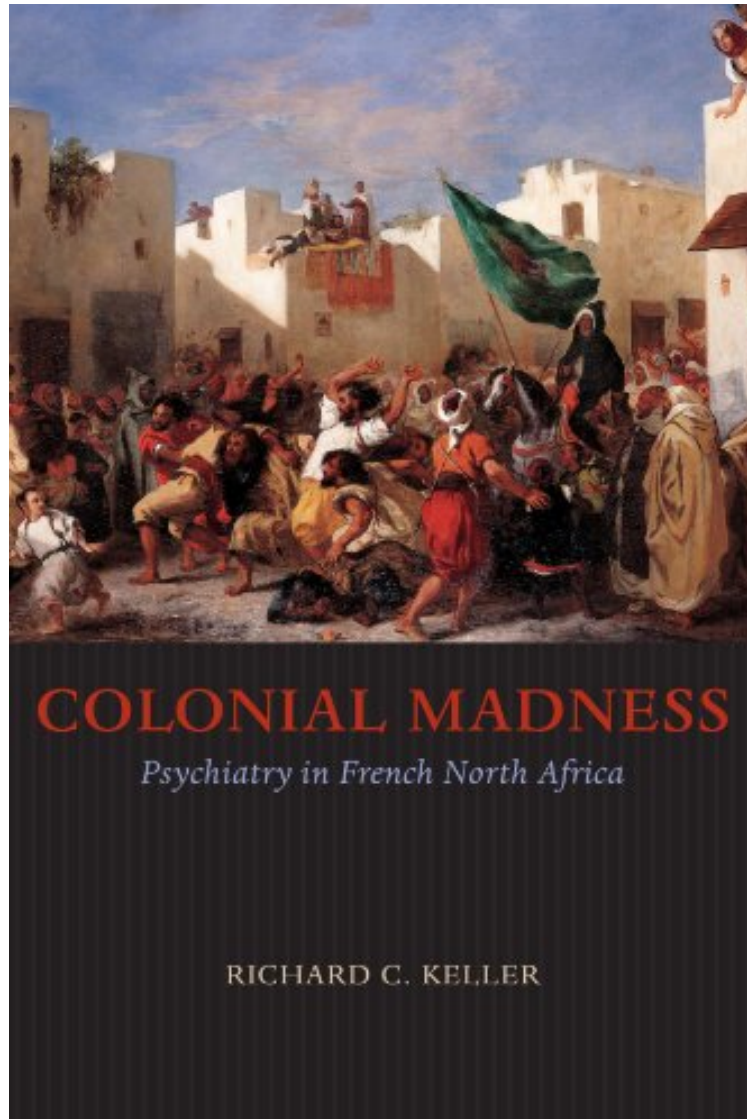


(Mobile book) Colonial Madness: Psychiatry in French North Africa

Colonial Madness: Psychiatry in French North Africa

Richard C. Keller

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Richard C. Keller : Colonial Madness: Psychiatry in French North Africa before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Colonial Madness: Psychiatry in French North Africa:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Dina OmarIt's a timely and important book.

Nineteenth-century French writers and travelers imagined Muslim colonies in North Africa to be realms of savage violence, lurid sexuality, and primitive madness. Colonial Madness traces the genealogy and development of this idea

from the beginnings of colonial expansion to the present, revealing the ways in which psychiatry has been at once a weapon in the arsenal of colonial racism, an innovative branch of medical science, and a mechanism for negotiating the meaning of difference for republican citizenship. Drawing from extensive archival research and fieldwork in France and North Africa, Richard Keller offers much more than a history of colonial psychology. *Colonial Madness* explores the notion of what French thinkers saw as an inherent mental, intellectual, and behavioral rift marked by the Mediterranean, as well as the idea of the colonies as an experimental space freed from the limitations of metropolitan society and reason. These ideas have modern relevance, Keller argues, reflected in French thought about race and debates over immigration and France's postcolonial legacy.

Postcolonial studies has frequently looked to North African Francophone materials for its understanding of the psychological impact of colonialism. Now we know why. Keller brilliantly gives us a context for understanding such figures as Frantz Fanon, as well as showing how metropolitan histories of mental health are fundamentally lacking. He does not only give a history of the understanding and treatment of madness in North Africa. This richly informative book also shows how no story of modern madness is complete without a thorough understanding of the constitutive role colonialism has played in its formation and treatment. Thoroughly researched, well-written, and brilliantly argued, Keller shows that there were both disciplinary and utopian ideas that emerged from North Africa about madness, and how these came to inform medical science, literary texts, architecture, and the concept of the human on both sides of the Mediterranean.