



Disordered Personalities and Crime: An analysis of the history of moral insanity

David W. Jones



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Disordered Personalities and Crime seeks to better understand how we respond to those individuals who have been labelled at various points in time as ‘morally insane’, ‘psychopathic’ or ‘personality disordered’. Individuals whose behaviour is consistent with these diagnoses present challenges to both the criminal justice system and mental health systems, because the people who come to have such diagnoses seem to have a rational and realistic understanding of the world around them but they can behave in ways that suggest they have little understanding of the meaning or consequences of their actions.

This book argues that an analysis of the history of these diagnoses will help to provide a better understanding of contemporary dilemmas. These are categories that have been not only shaped by the needs of criminal justice and the claims of expertise by professionals, but also the fears, anxieties and demands of the wider public. In this book, David W. Jones demonstrates us how important these diagnoses have been to the history of psychiatry in its claims for professional expertise, and also sheds light on the evolution of the insanity defence and helps explain why it remains a problematic and controversial issue even today.

This book will be key reading for students, researchers and academics who are interested in crime and its relationship to mental disorder and also for those interested in psychiatry and abnormal psychology.



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