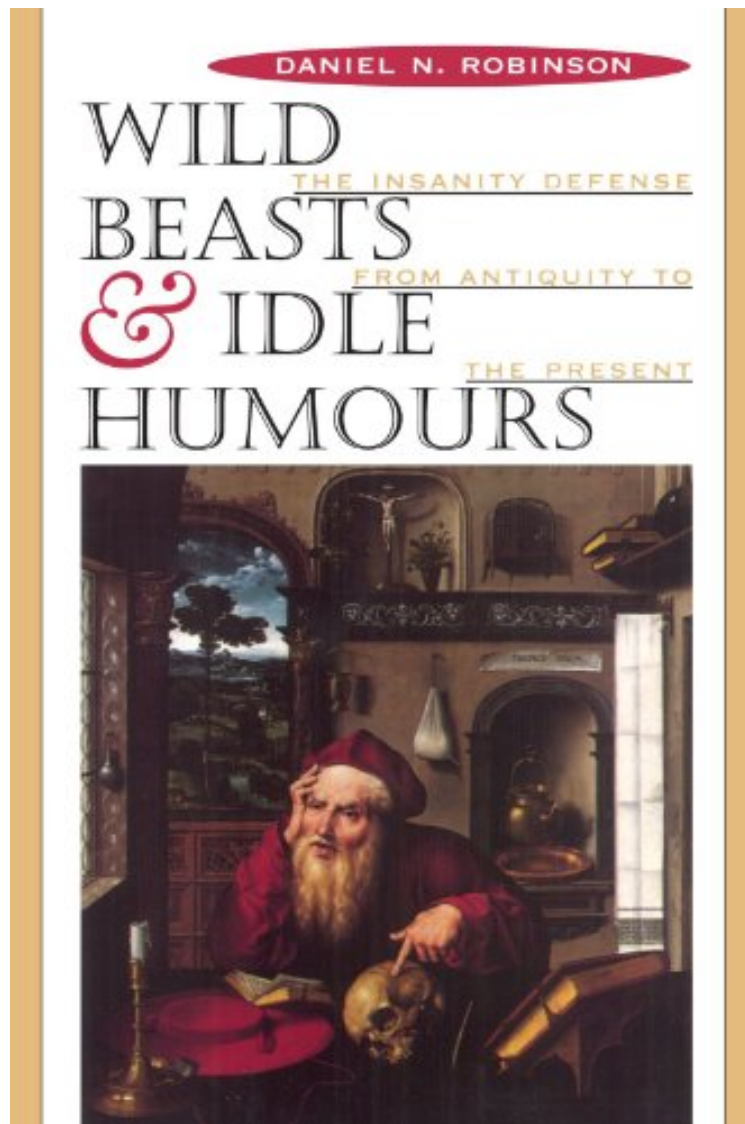


Wild Beasts and Idle Humours: The Insanity Defense from Antiquity to the Present

Daniel Robinson

audiobook / *ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#1620607 in Books Harvard University Press 1998-01-13 1998-01-16 Original language: English PDF # 1
8.25 x .78 x 5.50 | .79 #File Name: 0674952901312 pages | File size: 41.Mb

Daniel Robinson : Wild Beasts and Idle Humours: The Insanity Defense from Antiquity to the Present before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Wild Beasts and Idle Humours: The Insanity Defense from Antiquity to the Present:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. but within those chapters it was pretty much a free for all By Mary O'Mara This book was not well organized imo. The author did divide the book into discussions of various time periods,

but within those chapters it was pretty much a free for all. There was a lot of information, but it was presented in a way that required too much work on the part of the reader to place, what was pretty much a series of non sequiturs, into a logical order. It wasn't really worth it. The book wasn't particularly philosophical, which is a shame insofar as the nature of insanity very much calls our notions of free choice into question. I gave up after the first four chapters, and I usually finish books. 14 of 18 people found the following review helpful. Not for the Non-Specialist Reader By Ricky Hunter Daniel N. Robinson's *Wild Beasts and Idle Humours (The Insanity Defense from Antiquity to the Present)* sounds and looks more fun than it actually will be for the average reader without a sure grounding in legal, philosophical and psychological theory and history. The author does indeed cover the period from antiquity to the present, as per the sub-title, and provides many interesting ideas along the way, taking a rather conservative approach, but there are also many cases and people just dropped into the book without any explanation on the assumption that the reader will be familiar with all of these legal cases and philosophers from the past two centuries. A grounding in classical and medieval history (with luck I did have that) will help the reader manage the first part of the book. For students of legal history, this book could prove quite interesting and, perhaps, invaluable as the author makes a clever attempt to bring ideas of insanity as far back as the writings of Homer and Hesiod. For this poor soul, the book was a struggle with a few rewards along the way.

How does the law regard and define mental incompetence, when faced with the problem of meting out justice? To what extent has the law relied on extra-legal authorities? be they religious or scientific? to frame its own categories of mental incompetence and madness? *Wild Beasts and Idle Humours* takes us on an illuminating journey through the changing historical landscape of human nature and offers an unprecedented look at the legal conceptions of insanity from the pre-classical Greek world to the present. Although actual trial records are either totally lacking or incomplete until the eighteenth century, there are other sources from which the insanity defenses can be constructed. In this book Daniel N. Robinson, a distinguished historian of psychology, pores over centuries of written law, statements by legal commentators, summaries of crimes, and punishments, to glean from these sources an understanding of epochal views of responsibility and competence. From the Greek phrenesis to the Roman notions of *furiosus* and *non compos mentis*, from the seventeenth-century witch trials to today's interpretation of *mens rea*, Robinson takes us through history and provides the intricate story of how the insanity defense has been construed as a meeting point of the law and those professions that chart human behavior and conduct: namely religion, medicine, and psychology. The result is a rare historical account of "insanity" within Western civilization. *Wild Beasts and Idle Humours* will be essential reading for anyone interested in the evolution of thinking not merely about legal insanity but about such core concepts as responsibility, fitness for the rule of law, competence to enter into contracts and covenants, the role of punishments, and the place of experts within the overall juridical context.

Daniel N. Robinson has written a graceful history of insanity and the law stretching from Homer to Hinckley. He attempts no final theory as to how the law should cope with the insane; he seeks, rather, to use the shifting notions of when madness exculpates criminal activity to illuminate the core self-perceptions of the cultures developing ever-evolving resolutions of the problem... [T]he grandeur of the theme? starting with Agamemnon's crazed humiliation of Achilles and ending yesterday? commands attention and respect. (Neal Johnston *The Nation*) An American psychologist, Daniel N. Robinson, traces the development of the insanity plea... [He offers] an assured historical survey. (Roy Porter *The Times*) Professor Robinson's interesting and scholarly book is the first to deal with the history of legal insanity from Ancient Greece and Rome to modern times... Most of the book, dealing with a topic so little known, is fascinating. (Radmila May *Contemporary*) Anyone interested in the nature, meaning, and justification of an insanity defense will profit from Robinson's book, whether beginning an examination of that defense or seeking a deeper understanding of it... Highly recommended. (Choice) [This] work is a welcome addition to the literature and a valuable book for readers with an interest in either law or psychology. An intellectual history of the interplay of psychology and law within the narrow context of insanity as a legal defense in criminal or civil actions, this book carefully examines the views of human nature prevalent in classical Greece and Rome, the early and later Middle Ages, the Enlightenment, and the era of modern science. It then traces the influences of these ideas on the development of the concepts and structures of the law... Both lawyer and lay reader can read this book with benefit. (Library Journal) This book is a unique study. It is of great value because of the diversity, richness, and depth of intelligence which is brought to bear on its subject. The author is extremely well-read. He makes deft use of the history of ideas, theology, religious history, medicine and its history, political theory, jurisprudence, literary history, and the rules of evidence as they pertain to expert testimony. He is familiar with the resources of these many disciplines and demonstrates a remarkable ability to have them 'play' together, the way a philharmonic conductor leads the different sections of an orchestra. This is an intellectual symphony of a book. (Dennis Owens *Appellate Practice Journal and Update*) [A] wonderful book... This work ultimately stands as a treatise on Western law's ongoing struggle to contend with a hodge-podge of mental illnesses, unfortunate coincidences, and other unexplained phenomena, dealt with until recently under the rubric of 'magic.' It would be a shame for psychologists, psychiatrists, and legal scholars to miss

out on this book... No comprehensive collection of works in this area would be complete without a copy of *Wild Beasts and Idle Humours*. (Eric Drogen *The Federal Lawyer*) A detailed historical anthropology of legal insanity that draws upon multiple and rich historical sources from antiquity to the present. *Wild Beasts and Idle Humours* reads like the inner workings of a fascinating and disciplined narrative mind. (Dr. Robert Kinscherff, Massachusetts General Hospital) *Wild Beasts and Idle Humours* is truly unique. It synthesizes material that I do not believe has ever been considered in this context, and links up the historical past with contemporaneous values and politics. Robinson effortlessly weaves religious history, literary history, medical history, and political history, and demonstrates how the insanity defense cannot be fully understood without consideration of all these sources. (Michael L. Perlin, New York Law School)

From the Back Cover How does the law regard and define mental incompetence, when faced with the problem of meting out justice? To what extent has the law relied on extra-legal authorities - be they religious or scientific - to frame its own categories of mental incompetence and madness? *Wild Beasts and Idle Humours* takes us on an illuminating journey through the changing historical landscape of human nature and offers an unprecedented look at the legal conceptions of insanity from the pre-classical Greek world to the present. Although actual trial records are either totally lacking or incomplete until the eighteenth century, there are other sources from which the insanity defenses can be constructed. Daniel Robinson, a distinguished historian of psychology, has pored over centuries of written law, statements by legal commentators, summaries of crimes, and punishments, to glean from these sources an understanding of epochal views of responsibility and competence. From the Greek phrenesis to the Roman notions of *furiosus* and *non compos mentis*, from the seventeenth-century witch trials to today's interpretation of *mens rea*, Robinson takes us through the intricate history of how the insanity defense has been construed as a meeting point of the law and those professions that chart human behavior and conduct, namely, religion, medicine, and psychology. The result is a rare historical account of "insanity" within western civilization. *Wild Beasts and Idle Humours* will be essential reading for anyone interested in the evolution of thinking not merely about legal insanity but also about such core concepts as responsibility, fitness for the rule of law, competence to enter into contracts and covenants, the role of punishments, and the place of experts within the overall juridical context.

About the Author Daniel N. Robinson is Distinguished Professor, Emeritus, at Georgetown University and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Oxford.