



Responsibility and psychopathy: Interfacing law, psychiatry and philosophy (International Perspectives in Philosophy and Psychiatry)

Luca Malatesti, John McMillan

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Psychopaths have emotional impairments that can be expressed in persistent criminal behavior. UK and US law has traditionally excused disordered individuals for their crimes citing these emotional impairments as a cause for their criminal behaviour. The discussion of whether psychopaths are morally responsible for their behaviour has long taken place in the realm of philosophy. However, in recent years, this has moved into scientific and psychiatric investigation, fundamentally so with the development of Robert Hare's diagnostic tool, the Psychopathy Checklist.

Responsibility and Psychopathy explores the moral responsibility of psychopaths. It engages with problems at the interface of law, psychiatry, and philosophy, and is divided into three parts providing relevant interdisciplinary background information to address this main problem.

The first part discusses the public policy and legal responses to psychopathy. It offers an introduction to the central practical issue of how public policy should respond to psychopathy, giving insights for those arguing about the responsibility of psychopaths.

The second part introduces recent scientific advancements in the classification, description, and explanation of psychopathy. In particular, Robert Hare illustrates and defends his Psychopathy Checklist (PCL). Surveys of the most recent brain imaging studies on psychopaths and the prospects for treatment are also included.

The third part of the volume includes chapters covering the most significant dimensions of philosophical debate on the moral and criminal responsibility of psychopaths. In relation to this issue, philosophers have considered whether psychopathic offenders possess moral understanding and/or are capable of controlling their criminal behaviour. This part illustrates how answering these questions involves investigating highly debated and central philosophical problems.

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