How the construct of psychopathy impacts criminal justice professionals, and “anyone who wants to learn about psychopathy” should read this book. Its intended audience is students, criminal justice professionals, and “anyone who wants to learn about psychopathy and criminal justice practice” (xvi). In the eight chapters and seventy pages of references, Helfgott covers the history of the disorder (first described by Phillipe Pinel in 1801) and its treatment as it moved from being thought of as a moral disorder, a medical disorder, and eventually a mental disorder, as well as covering the future of psychopathy study and its relevance in the world of criminal justice.

The chapter on psychopaths in popular culture was fascinating: besides referencing the most famous fictional psychopaths in pop culture, such as Hannibal Lecter (complete with his fava beans), Patrick Bateman, and Dexter Morgan, there is a fourteen-page table detailing characters in films with psychopathic behaviors from 1931–2018. Some surprise characters include Scarlett O’Hara from Gone with the Wind, George and Martha from Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf, Carrie from Stephen King’s Carrie, and Amy and Nick from Gone Girl.

Helfgott also delves into why we find these characters so compelling. Research supports several theories, including catharsis—we might watch movies with “fantasy aggression” so we don’t go out and do horrible things ourselves (173). Whatever the reason, “we all have the potential to be attracted to violent images to emotionally regulate, socially bond, and to be reminded of the cultural boundaries of human behavior” (175).

No Remorse is recommended for college and university libraries, as well as for larger public libraries. It’s also recommended that libraries place this book in a nonfiction collection instead of reference so it can circulate.

—Tracy Carr, Library Services Director, Mississippi Library Commission, Jackson, Mississippi


Jacqueline B. Helfgott’s No Remorse: Psychopathy and Criminal Justice is a heavily researched, yet immensely readable textbook. Its intended audience is students, criminal justice professionals, and “anyone who wants to learn about how the construct of psychopathy impacts criminal justice policy and practice” (xiii). Helfgott, the director of the Crime and Justice Research Center at Seattle University’s Department of Criminal Justice, draws the general reader in by using examples from popular culture and everyday life to illustrate her points.

For instance, we nonpsychopaths can use psychopathic mental strategies in order to do things that make us feel guilty—like breaking up with a partner. Who hasn’t employed a little shallow affect (reduced emotional expression) in order to get through a breakup speech or a bit of lying (“it’s not you, it’s me”) to do the same?

The author states that the book aims “to provide a new lens through which to make sense of psychopathy that centralizes psychopathy in criminological theory and examines the ways in which psychopathy has made its way into criminal justice practice” (xvi). In the eight chapters and seventy pages of references, Helfgott covers the history of the disorder (first described by Phillipe Pinel in 1801) and its treatment as it moved from being thought of as a moral disorder, a medical disorder, and eventually a mental disorder, as well as covering the future of psychopathy study and its relevance in the world of criminal justice.

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While many aspects of American life and culture have changed and evolved, one commonality that remains a constant throughout the generations are the ever-changing passions and obsessions of the American people. Whether it be a new genre of music, innovative toys and games, or the latest fashion trends, these compulsions burn incredibly hot and often very fast. Not long after the establishment of whatever the latest craze may be, attentions drift away and onto the next hottest trend in the blink of an eye. Here to enlighten interested readers on the many cultural obsessions that have captivated America throughout its history is Nancy Hendrick’s Popular Fads and Crazes through American History.


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