



The Myth of the Born Criminal: Psychopathy, Neurobiology, and the Creation of the Modern Degenerate

By Jarkko Javala, Stephanie Griffiths, Michael Maraun

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By some estimates, there are as many as twelve million psychopaths in the United States alone. Cold-blooded, remorseless, and strangely charismatic, they commit at least half of all serious and violent crimes. Supposedly, most serial killers are psychopaths, as, surprisingly, are large numbers of corporate executives. They seem to be an inescapable, and fascinating, threat in our midst.

But is psychopathy a brain disorder, as many scientists now claim? Or is it just a reflection of modern society's deepest fears? *The Myth of the Born Criminal* offers the first comprehensive critique of the concept of psychopathy from the eighteenth-century origins of the born-criminal theory to the latest neuroimaging, behavioural genetics, and statistical studies. Jarkko Javala, Stephanie Griffiths, and Michael Maraun use their expertise in neuropsychology, psychometrics, and criminology to dispel the myth that psychopathy is a biologically-based condition. Deconstructing the emotive language with which both research scientists and reporters describe the psychopaths among us, they explain how the idea of psychopathy offers a comforting neurobiological solution to the mystery of evil.

A stunning merger of rigorous science and clear-sighted cultural analysis, *The Myth of the Born Criminal* is for anyone who wonders just what truth – or fiction – lurks behind the study of psychopathy.

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Editorial Review

Review

“*The Myth of the Born Psychopath* presents something truly new, a comprehensive treatment of psychopathy’s defects. It is an important and necessary work. Indeed, its message deserves widespread attention.”

(Cary Federman, Department of Justice Studies, Montclair State University)

“I congratulate the authors of *The Myth of the Born Criminal* on writing what is the most sustained and compelling critique of the contemporary use of the concept of psychopathy to date.”

(Richard Weisman, Law and Society Program, Department of Social Science, York University)

About the Author

Jarkko Jalava is a college professor of criminology in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies at Okanagan College.

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