



Madness: A Very Short Introduction

By Andrew Scull



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Madness is something that frightens and fascinates us all. It is a word with which we are universally familiar, and a condition that haunts the human imagination. In this *Very Short Introduction*, Andrew Scull provides a provocative and entertaining examination of the social, cultural, medical, and artistic responses to mental disturbance across more than two millennia, concluding with some observations on the contemporary accounts of mental illness. He shows that through the centuries, in poetry and in prose, in drama and in the visual arts, madness has been on display for all to see. He also describes how a whole industry has grown up, devoted to its management and suppression. Perhaps most important, he conveys how madness profoundly disturbs our common sense assumptions; threatens the social order, both symbolically and practically; creates almost unbearable disruptions in the texture of daily living; and turns our experience and our expectations upside down. Throughout this fascinating history, many fascinating and arresting pictures illuminate the overall portrait of madness in its various contexts.



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Madness: A Very Short Introduction By Andrew Scull Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #315293 in Books
- Brand: Oxford University Press USA
- Published on: 2011-09-02
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 4.40" h x .40" w x 6.60" l, .30 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 152 pages

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Andrew Scull is Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Science Studies at the University of California, San Diego. He is past president of the Society for the Social History of Medicine.

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