

## Madness

A Very Short Introduction

By Andrew Scull

### Questions for thought and discussion

- Isn't the very word "madness": an insult, and thus a word best abandoned?
- How have religion and madness been connected in history?
- What can we learn from literary and pictorial representations of madness?
- How did seventeenth and eighteenth century medical theorists connect nerves and mental distress? Why did patients who exhibited milder forms of mental distress find these notions attractive?
- Were the private madhouses of the eighteenth century a wholly negative phenomenon?
- What are we to make of "moral treatment"?
- Why do some people refer to nineteenth century lunatic asylums as "museums of madness"?
- In what ways are gender and madness linked? Is it a mistake or entirely appropriate to speak of madness as "the female malady"?
- How did the mad come to be thought of as biological degenerates?
- What are we to make of the connections between war and mental illness, and the epidemics of "shell shock", "combat exhaustion", "post traumatic stress disorder", "Gulf War syndrome" and the like?
- Did the Nazi attempt to exterminate the mentally ill amount to anything more than taking ideas that were equally widespread in Britain, France, and the United States to their logical conclusion?
- Why are the mad so vulnerable to therapeutic enthusiasms?
- Were lobotomies ever justifiable?
- How did psychoanalysis come to be so dominant in the United States after the Second World War, and what explains its rapid demise?
- What is meant by the term "refrigerator mother", and why might the spread of theories associated with this term have encouraged patients' families to re-embrace biological accounts of mental illness?
- Why do you think Hollywood has exhibited such a persistent fascination with madness as a subject?
- Why do some people proclaim that mental illness is a myth? Should we believe them?
- What accounts for the crises of legitimacy that periodically confront psychiatry?
- How can we account for the abandonment of mental hospitals, and what has replaced them for the gravely mentally ill? Is it legitimate to call this development "a reform"?
- What are we to make of the drugs revolution in psychiatry? How has it influenced the psychiatric profession, the experience of being mentally ill, and the views of the general public about madness?

### Other books by Andrew Scull:

Andrew Scull *Hysteria: The Disturbing History* (London and New York: Oxford University Press)

Andrew Scull *The Most Solitary of Afflictions: Madness and Society in Britain, 1700-1900* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press)

Andrew Scull *Madhouse: A Tragic Tale of Megalomania and Modern Medicine* (London and New Haven: Yale University Press)

Andrew Scull *The Insanity of Place/The Place of Insanity* (London and New York: Routledge)

Andrew Scull with Jonathan Andrews , *Undertaker of the Mind: John Monro and Mad-Doctoring in Eighteenth Century England* , (Berkeley: University of California Press)  
Andrew Scull *Customers and Patrons of the Mad Trade: The Management of Lunacy in Eighteenth Century London* (Berkeley: University of California Press)  
Andrew Scull with Nicholas Hervey and Charlotte MacKenzie, *Masters of Bedlam: The Transformation of the Mad-Doctoring Trade* (Princeton: Princeton University Press)  
Andrew Scull *Social Order/Mental Disorder: Anglo-American Psychiatry in Historical Perspective* (Berkeley: University of California Press.)  
Andrew Scull *Decarceration: Community Treatment and the Deviant* (Cambridge: Polity Press)

Suggested further reading:

Bennett Simon, *Mind and Madness in Ancient Greece* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press)  
Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)  
Janet Oppenheim, *"Shattered Nerves": Doctors, Patients and Depression in Victorian England* (London and New York: Oxford University Press)  
Ben Shepherd, *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists, 1914-1994* (London: Pimlico Books)  
George Makari, *Revolution in Mind: The Creation of Psychoanalysis* (London: Duckworth)  
David Healy, *The Anti-Depressant Era* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press)