Shakespeare's Criminals: Criminology, Fiction, and Drama

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Description
By exploring Shakespeare's use of law and justice themes in the context of historical and contemporary criminological thinking, this book challenges criminologists to expand their spheres of inquiry to avenues that have yet to be explored or integrated into the discipline. Crime writers, including William Shakespeare, were some of the earliest investigators of the criminal mind. However, since the formalization of criminology as a discipline, citations from literary works have often been omitted, despite their interdisciplinary nature. Taking various Shakespearean plays and characters as case studies, this book opens novel theoretical avenues for conceptualizing crime and justice issues.

What types of crimes did Shakespeare's characters commit? What were the motivations put forth for these crimes? What type of social control did Shakespeare advocate? By utilizing a content analysis procedure, the author confirms that many of the crimes that plague society today were also prevalent in Shakespeare's time. She gleans twelve criminological theories as motivations for character deviance. Character analysis also provides valuable insight into Shakespeare's notions of formal and informal social control. [From Amazon.com]

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say about criminology: Criminology involves three different types of problems: (1) The problem of detecting the law breaker... (2) The problem of the custody and treatment of the offender once he is detected and legally judged to be guilty, which is the work of the penologist. The explanation of criminal behavior is of interest to the sociologist, the psychologist, the psychiatrist, the anthropologist and the biologist. He goes on: "Why people behave as they do, and why the behavior is regarded as criminal are two separate problems requiring different types of explanation." Shakespeare’s Unreformed Fictions contends that the answers to this question are theatrical rather than strictly theological. Avoiding biographical speculation, this book concentrates on dramatic impact, and thoroughly integrates new literary analysis with fresh historical research. In exploring the dramaturgical variety of the ‘Catholic’ content of Shakespeare’s plays, Gillian Woods argues that habits, idioms, images, and ideas lose their denominational clarity when translated into dramatic fiction: they are awkwardly ‘unreformed’ rather than doctrinally Catholic. Why does Catholicism have such an imaginative hold on Shakespearean drama, even though the ongoing Reformation outlawed its practice?