



# **Madness: An American History of Mental Illness and Its Treatment**

*Mary De Young*

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"Madness" is, of course, personally experienced, but because of its intimate relationship to the sociocultural context, it is also socially constructed, culturally represented and socially controlled--all of which make it a topic ripe for sociological analysis. Using a range of historical and contemporary textual material, this work exercises the sociological imagination to explore some of the most perplexing questions in the history of madness, including why some behaviors, thoughts and emotions are labeled mad while others are not; why they are labeled mad in one historical period and not another; why the label of mad is applied to some types of people and not others; by whom the label is applied, and with what consequences.



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