



Crime, Desire and Law's Unconscious: Law, Literature and Culture

By David Gurnham

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Sexual desire, and the possible dangers associated with its more extreme manifestations, provokes strong, albeit often contradictory reactions. Such reactions are a well-known stimulant of creative, juridical and scholarly activity, and the texts of law, literature and academic criticism respond to it in ways that suggest both of revulsion and fascination. But how are we to understand such responses, and what can they tell us about the relationship between law and its 'others'? Exploring these questions in the context of HIV transmission, on-street sexual exploitation and erotic asphyxiation, this book draws on psychoanalytic theory in order to understand the motivations behind legal, literary and cultural constructions of sexual offences, their perpetrators and victims. Its analysis of these constructions in a diverse range of sources - including appeal judgments in England & Wales and North America, criminal trials and their reporting, visual and linguistic cultures and both modern and 'classical' literature - will be of great interest to legal theorists and socio-legal scholars, as well as those with relevant concerns in the fields of literature and cultural studies.

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Crime, Desire and Law's Unconscious: Law, Literature and Culture By David Gurnham Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #7514034 in Books
- Published on: 2014-07-03
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .60" h x 6.10" w x 9.10" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 160 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

David Gurnham challenges the privileged nature of law's discourse in his interesting new book. He proposes to treat "the law as a patient and its texts manifest content of dream", thereby bringing, through analysis, "those concealed ideas eventually to the surface, to give themselves up as a train of thought leading back to an otherwise hidden source". - **Terri Apter, Newnham College.(2014)**

About the Author

David Gurnham is currently a Reader in Law at the University of Southampton. Research interests are criminal law, law and literature, healthcare law and legal theory. Recent publications include the monograph *Memory, Imagination, Justice: Intersections of Law and Literature* (Ashgate 2009), as well as a number of articles and book chapter contributions

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Mary Gillon:

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