

## BOOK REVIEW

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### *A Review of The Insanity Defense—Philosophical, Historical and Legal Perspectives*

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**REFERENCE:** Hermann, D. H. J., *The Insanity Defense—Philosophical, Historical and Legal Perspectives*, Charles C Thomas, 2600 S. First, Springfield, IL 62717, 1983, 152 pages, \$24.75.

Donald H. J. Hermann has written a substantial volume on the insanity defense. The book is timely in its publication, as the debate on the Hinckley case continues in the media and the insanity defense is again subject to intense public scrutiny.

Professor Hermann insists that the insanity defense is not only an essential element of Anglo-American system of law, but also has a historic basis in Judeo-Christian ethics and philosophy.

The author is well qualified to deal with the complexities of the insanity defense; he is both lawyer and philosopher and the chapters on responsibility: moral presuppositions is followed by a chapter on responsibility: legal criteria. The review of the philosophical background for the insanity defense is scholarly in its presentation and is followed by a more conventional review of the legal history of nonresponsibility for crime.

The conclusion of the study states that the legal test for insanity should be based on a determination of the existence and effect of mental disease on the understanding *and* the volitional aspects of the personality.

The 30 pages of bibliography offer an extended reference to germinal articles and cases involving the insanity defense.

This is a substantial volume and an excellent resource reference.

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