



Shell-Shock and Medical Culture in First World War Britain (Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Modern Warfare)

Tracey Loughran

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Shell-Shock and Medical Culture in First World War Britain is a thought-provoking reassessment of medical responses to war-related psychological breakdown in the early twentieth century. Dr Loughran places shell-shock within the historical context of British psychological medicine to examine the intellectual resources doctors drew on as they struggled to make sense of nervous collapse. She reveals how medical approaches to shell-shock were formulated within an evolutionary framework which viewed mental breakdown as regression to a level characteristic of earlier stages of individual or racial development, but also ultimately resulted in greater understanding and acceptance of psychoanalytic approaches to human mind and behaviour. Through its demonstration of the crucial importance of concepts of mind-body relations, gender, willpower and instinct to the diagnosis of shell-shock, this book locates the disorder within a series of debates on human identity dating back to the Darwinian revolution and extending far beyond the medical sphere.

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