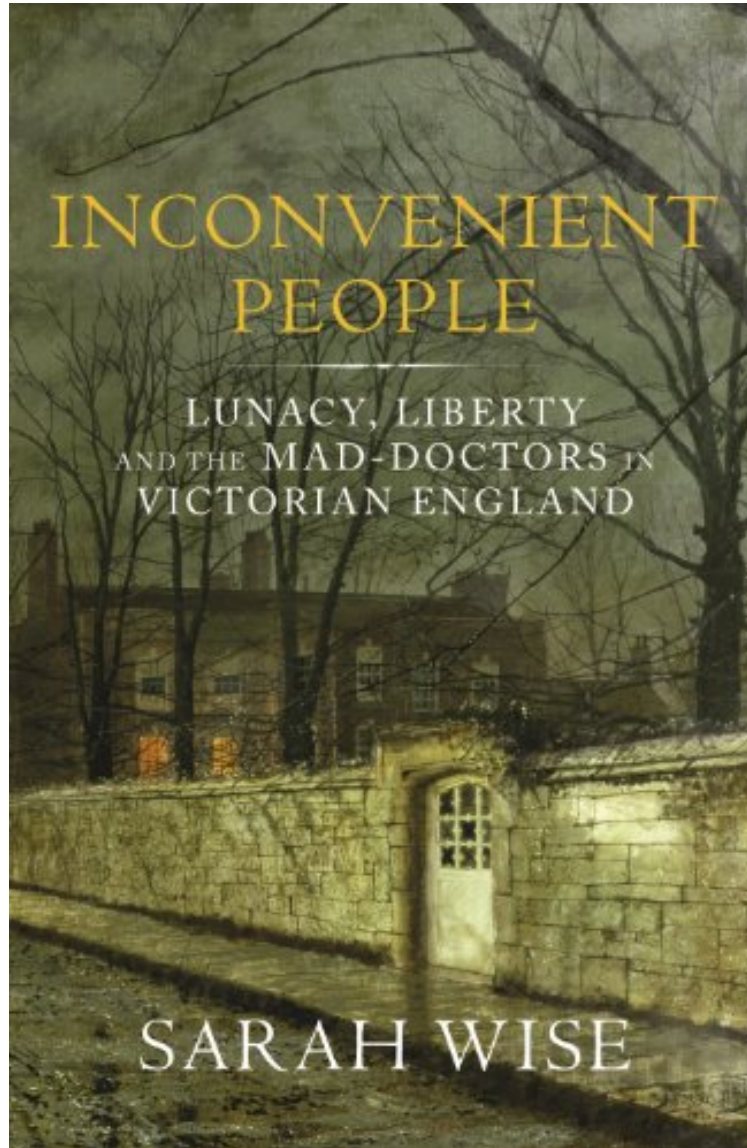


[Download] Inconvenient People: Lunacy, Liberty and the Mad-Doctors in Victorian England

Inconvenient People: Lunacy, Liberty and the Mad-Doctors in Victorian England

Sarah Wise

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Sarah Wise : Inconvenient People: Lunacy, Liberty and the Mad-Doctors in Victorian England before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Inconvenient People: Lunacy, Liberty and the Mad-Doctors in Victorian England:

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating book
By Leanne Brinton
This is my first read of this author, having seen this on a book list in the Globe and Mail. Although a comprehensive and detailed research of the subject of the lunacy movement in the early to late 1800's in England, this book is far from dry. I found the stories of individuals and their unwilling committals to both private and public asylums fascinating. In most cases, these mostly wealthy people were the victims of their own family members' desires to see them removed so that their wealth and property could be more easily taken over by those with motives for self-gain. The details of the victims' struggles to regain their freedom as well as the descriptions of their personalities and in some cases eccentricities or religious fervour are vividly portrayed. This book makes one think about how culture deals with mental illness and conformity to social norms. The author clearly does her homework as the appendices comprise a large portion of the book.
Interesting!

The 19th century saw a series of panics about sane individuals being locked away in lunatic asylums, and public feeling often ran high against the rising 'alienist' (or 'mad doctor') profession. English liberty was seen to be under threat from a new class of men who would sign away freedom in return for the high fees paid by unscrupulous people who wanted to be rid of a 'difficult' family member, spouse or friend. But who were the victims of this trade? And to what extent was it carried on? Why was it a problem for the wealthy and less so for the poor? Twelve separate stories of contested lunacy cases -- ranging from the 1820s to the 1890s -- reveal the various types of persons who came under threat of incarceration, the support that their plight aroused in the public mind and the newspapers, and doctors' shifting arguments about what constituted insanity.

"An illuminating look at an area of social history that inspired Wilkie Collins among others" -- Sebastian Faulks Daily Telegraph, Books of the Year "Sarah Wise is an excellent writer, and those who pick up this book will not lightly put it down. Her ten chapters read like short novels, and she has the true social historian's ability to make her period come alive. She selects and compresses the salient details beautifully; one often feels as if one is actually present at the scenes she describes. There can be no higher praise... Inconvenient People is as interesting a work of social history as you are ever likely to read" -- Anthony Daniels Spectator "The great gift of Sarah Wise's excellent Inconvenient People is to blow apart the myth that the most likely victim of the lunacy laws was a married woman... If much of Inconvenient People reads like a mood book through which Wilkie Collins might have flipped if stuck for inspiration, there are moments of high farce too. Wise is flexible enough in her narrative register to make it all right to find this very funny indeed" -- Kathryn Hughes Guardian "Deeply researched and gripping... The book owes its enormous power to Sarah Wise's patience. She has sifted through hundreds of case histories... It makes for harrowing reading, but much of it is also hilarious, and as gripping as the most lurid Victorian melodramatic novel. Yet again, one closes a book with the impression that beneath the polished mahogany surfaces and shimmering silks of Victorian interiors lurked Hell itself" -- A N Wilson Mail on Sunday "Fascinating... Sarah Wise has used her subject like an axe, to split open the Victorian facade and examine everything wriggling behind. It has enough tragedy, comedy, farce and horror to fill a dozen fat novels, and enough bizarre characters to people them" -- Suzi Feay Financial Times
About the Author
SARAH WISE has a BA in English Literature and a Masters degree in Victorian Studies, from Birkbeck College, University of London. Her book *The Blackest Streets* was published by Bodley Head in 2008 and was shortlisted for the Royal Society of Literature's Ondaatje Prize in 2009; it was a Book of the Year in the Sunday Telegraph and The Economist and for BBC Radio 4's Saturday programme. Her debut, *The Italian Boy: Murder and Grave Robbery in 1830s London*, was shortlisted for the 2005 Samuel Johnson Prize and won the Crime Writers' Association Gold Dagger for Non-Fiction. Sarah was a major contributor to Iain Sinclair's compendium *London, City of Disappearances*. She has spoken on Radio 4's *Thinking Allowed*, *Woman's Hour* and the *Today* programme, and on BBC Radio London and LBC Radio, and she regularly lectures to societies and at history events. She lives in central London.