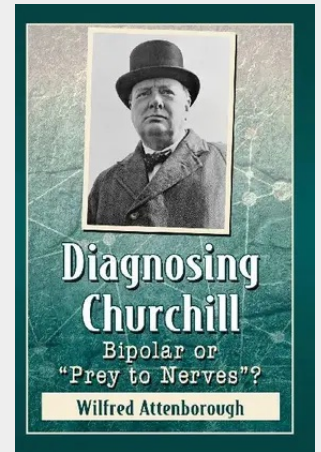


Diagnosing Churchill

Bipolar or "Prey to Nerves"?

This pioneering book investigates how biographical evidence has been variously used, misused, or not used at all, by clinicians entirely reliant on biographical evidence for the influential posthumous diagnoses they have produced of Winston Churchill as a manic-depressive. Attention is paid, also, to the distinct question of Churchill and "nerves," otherwise known as neurasthenia. This question has a place alongside the manic-depression issue because, by ensuring there is a marked contrast between two lines of biographical inquiry, it facilitates a significant move in the direction of a more rounded, a more securely founded, understanding of how Churchill functioned psychologically, and how he did not. That goal of a more rounded understanding is important, and the contribution Diagnosing Churchill makes towards its achievement is worthwhile, because accuracy in the depiction of key elements in the functioning of a major historical figure, one of the heroes of Western democratic civilization, is enjoined by a principle Churchill expressed thus: "the meanest historian owes something to the truth."

The posthumous diagnosis of Winston Churchill as manic-depressive has been drawn entirely from biographical information, which, though significant to understanding his life and mind, has often been misused or misunderstood. This book investigates how such materials have been interpreted (and misinterpreted) in relation to Churchill's mental health, taking a particularly close look at his association with nerves or "neurasthenia." Included are appendices on Churchill's remedies for worry and mental overstrain and an investigation of his mental state after losing the 1945 general election.



50,50 €

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Lieferfrist: bis zu 10 Tage

Artikelnummer: 9781476675145

Medium: Buch

ISBN: 978-1-4766-7514-5

Verlag: McFarland

Erscheinungstermin: 22.04.2019

Sprache(n): Englisch

Auflage: Erscheinungsjahr 2019

Produktform: Kartoniert

Gewicht: 452 g

Seiten: 231

Format (B x H): 152 x 229 mm

