Blog Topic: The Mind of A Psychopath

(...) Are psychopaths suffering from a ‘disease’? What is the direction of causality with respect to research findings involving the brain? Should they be held responsible for their actions? Should they be punished? Should considerations regarding the origins of psychopathy be introduced during trials of crimes like the Connecticut murders discussed above?

Psychopaths are suffering from a disease in my opinion. Many of the regions of the brain discussed in the post might have something to do with psychopaths developing their pattern of behavior, however, I would also argue that the environment might have a large impact of the onset of the disease. Similar to PTSD, individuals might have a genetic predisposition to acquire psychopathy and when provided the correct environment to express themselves, their genes might do so. In this instance, I would argue that the onset of the psychopathy stems from the environment. An alternate explanation could be a limited functioning of the patients mirror neurons. While this is only a hypothesis, a lack of ability to perceive pain as well as emotion in others might lead to a lack of perception in themselves and ultimately may play into the onset of the antisocial behavioral patterns associated with psychopathy. This example credits the brain as the culprit of the disease.

Regardless of the onset of the disease, individuals must be responsible for their actions. Whether the punishment for crimes committed by individuals included in the 15- 35% mentioned in the blog post includes prison or admittance to a mental hospital, the matter of the fact is the safety of the public is at risk if psychopaths aren't tried as criminals once they commit a crime. As the blog mentions, these individuals often pose risks to those around them as well as to themselves and accordingly they must be punished if they commit a crime. While some of the crimes committed by psychopaths are heinous and unthinkable, the disease should be mentioned in the prosecution of the cases that involve affected criminals. While it may not change the ultimate ruling of the judge, in lesser cases relative to the case from Connecticut alternative punishment could suffice. Not every psychopath is committing murder and a number of affected individuals might be able to receive help however when all is said and done psychopaths must be submitted to punishment through the justice system in a similar fashion to the non-affected population.