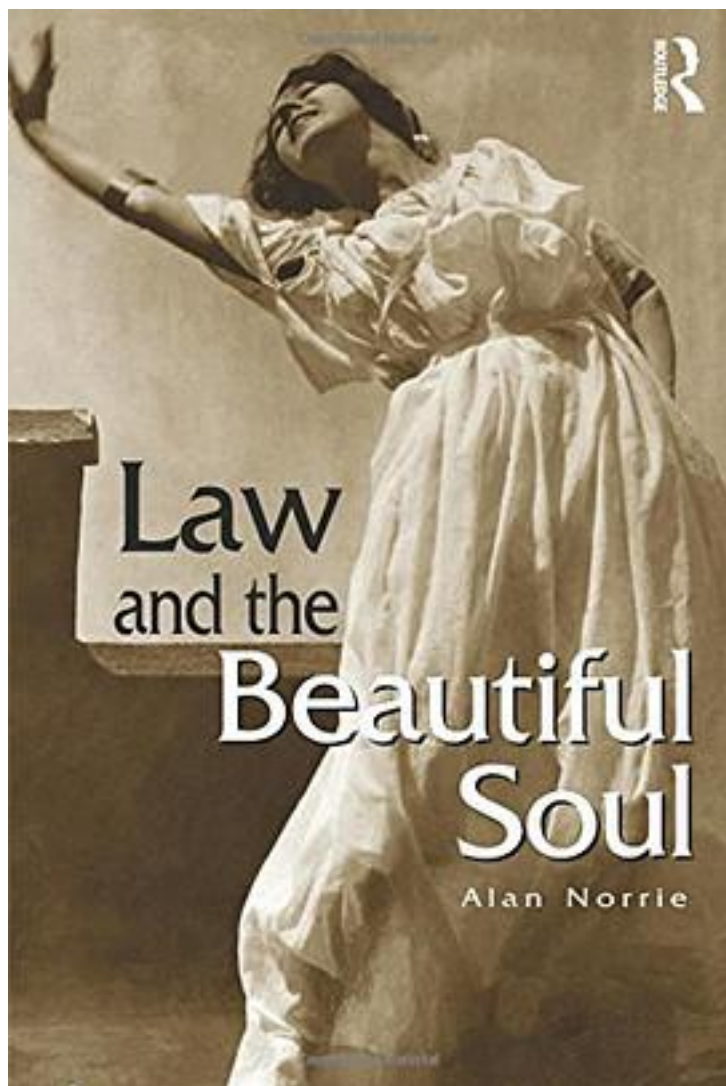


Law & the Beautiful Soul



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What is law? How is legal responsibility defined? How does law reflect moral judgment? Why are law's definitions uncertain and conflicted? Basic questions for liberal law and criminal justice - what could they have to do with the forgotten historical figure of the Beautiful Soul? Starting from concrete legal issues, Alan Norrie develops a critical vision of law in its relation to morality and socio-historical context. Liberal law, he argues, is marked by splits and contradictions (antinomies), signs of something missed. Traced historically, such conflicts can be read today in law's treatment of legality and justice, judgment and responsibility. A critical understanding must also be self-critical. From splits in law, Norrie moves to the split in critique: between its socio-historical and ethical forms. Drawing on critical realism and deconstruction, on the dialectics of Hegel, Adorno and Bhaskar, he argues for a form of critical thought that is at once historical and ethical. Thinking critically about critique finally leads to the Beautiful Soul, and its unexpected relation to law. These essays will be of interest to academics and advanced students of legal theory; criminal law, criminology and criminal justice; law and social theory; and critical legal studies.

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