



The Invisible Plague: The Rise of mental Illness from 1750 to the Present

By E. Fuller Torrey M.D., Judy Miller

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The prevalence of insanity, which was once considerably less than one case per 1,000 total population, has risen beyond five cases in 1,000. Why has mental illness reached epidemic proportions? What are the causes of severe mental illness? Why do we continue to deny the rising numbers, and how does this denial affect our ability to help those who are afflicted?

In *The Invisible Plague*, E. Fuller Torrey and Judy Miller examine the records on insanity in England, Ireland, Canada, and the United States over a 250-year period, concluding, through both qualitative and quantitative evidence, that disorders like schizophrenia and bipolar illness are an unrecognized, modern-day plague. This book is a unique and major contribution to medical history. Until now, insanity, and its apparent rise over the centuries, has been interpreted as a socially and economically driven phenomenon. Torrey and Miller insist upon the biological reality of psychiatric disease and examine the reasons why its contemporary prevalence has been so profoundly misunderstood.

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Editorial Review

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In their refreshing, thoroughly documented, cogent reply to the current generally accepted interpretation of the incidence and even the existence of insanity, Torrey and Miller point out many holes in the arguments of other recent historians of the subject and don't push any single approach to schizophrenia and manic depression. Instead, they ask for a spirit of inquiry because so much about the rate of growth and the causes of mental illness remains unclear that open-minded research and clinical studies are still very much needed. Although there are a lot of statistics and graphs, as well as explication of them, in the book, there is also enough history of diagnosis and treatment in the U.S., England, Ireland, and Canada to fascinate readers whose favorite topic isn't numbers. The book delves deeply into clinical accounts and historic insane-asylum politics, funding, and social acceptance. Frequent reference to literary works and authors lightens the tone of the proceedings, as does the authors' hypothesis of a relationship between the wearing of stockings and the incidence of insanity. *William Beatty*

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Review

"The authors have done impressive research locating an enormous number of examples of mental distress in the geographic and temporal areas of their focus." -- *Journal of the History of Medicine*

"This highly informative and stimulating work has certainly raised some neglected questions that demand more serious scientific attention." -- *Nature*

From the Back Cover

Insanity, in one guise or another, has always been with us, an occasional, unbidden guest at life's masquerade. In recent centuries, however, it has appeared in previously unseen masks and in much greater numbers. The prevalence of insanity, which had once been considerably less than one case per 1,000 total population, has risen beyond five cases in 1,000. Why has insanity reached epidemic proportions? What are the causes of severe mental illness? Why do we continue to deny the rising numbers, and how does this denial affect our ability to help those who are afflicted?

In *The Invisible Plague*, E. Fuller Torrey and Judy Miller examine the records on insanity in England, Ireland, Canada, and the United States over a 250-year period, concluding, through both qualitative and quantitative evidence, that insanity is an unrecognized, modern-day plague. Their conclusion is based on demographic data, the writings of psychiatrists, and numerous literary sources. This book is a unique and major contribution to medical history. Until now, insanity, and its apparent rise over the centuries, has been interpreted as a socially and economically driven phenomenon. The present authors insist upon the biological reality of insanity and examine the reasons why epidemic insanity has been so profoundly misunderstood. The book concludes with descriptions of the possible biological causes of insanity.

By failing to understand insanity as an epidemic, we fail to appreciate its role in, for example, the Salem witch trials, the eugenics movement, and the mental hygiene movement, and its important effects on modern literature. We also fail to fully understand and address contemporary tragedies of the epidemic, such as the number of individuals with schizophrenia and manic-depressive illness who are homeless or in jails.

Users Review

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Karen Plum:

Here thing why this kind of The Invisible Plague: The Rise of mental Illness from 1750 to the Present are different and reputable to be yours. First of all looking at a book is good nonetheless it depends in the content from it which is the content is as scrumptious as food or not. The Invisible Plague: The Rise of mental Illness from 1750 to the Present giving you information deeper including different ways, you can find any publication out there but there is no guide that similar with The Invisible Plague: The Rise of mental Illness from 1750 to the Present. It gives you thrill examining journey, its open up your own eyes about the thing that happened in the world which is maybe can be happened around you. It is easy to bring everywhere like in park your car, café, or even in your method home by train. For anyone who is having difficulties in bringing the published book maybe the form of The Invisible Plague: The Rise of mental Illness from 1750 to the Present in e-book can be your alternative.

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Jennifer Bell:

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