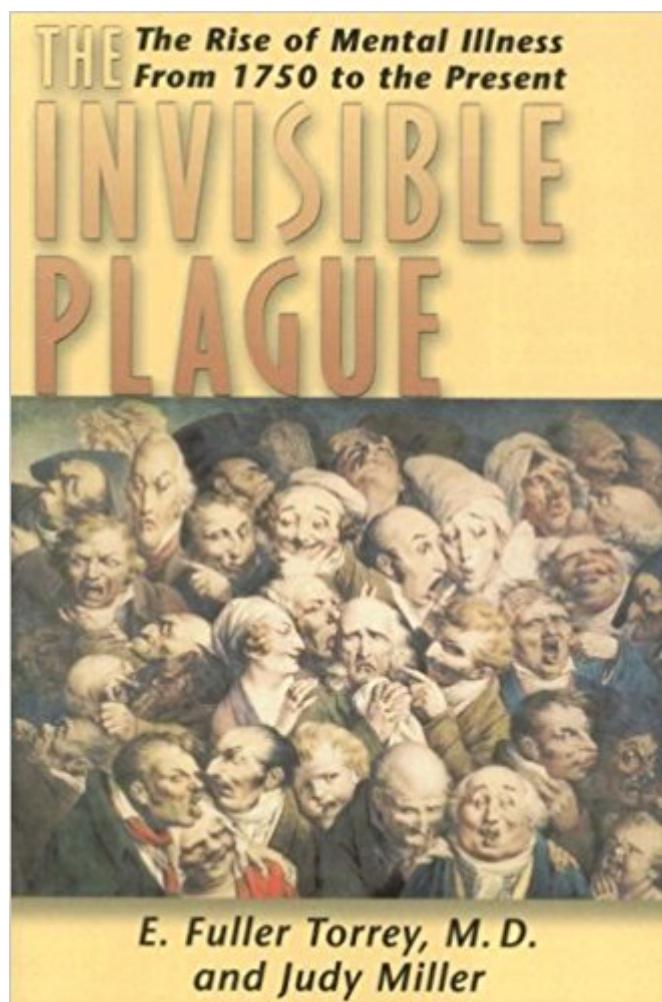


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# Invisible Plague: The Rise Of Mental Illness From 1750 To The Present



## Synopsis

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.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Are we living in an insanity epidemic? Yes indeed, we certainly are, according to *The Invisible Plague* by Dr. Edwin Fuller Torrey and Judy Miller. This book provides an illuminating history of insanity, focusing on the last three centuries in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, and the United States. "Insanity" here refers to two conditions, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder (manic-depressive). Today, "psychosis" is the proper term for describing insanity and lunacy, but the authors preferred to use history's word, insanity. The objective of this book was to convince us that

an epidemic of insanity has been growing in Western society, based on a small mountain of circumstantial evidence. Insanity seems to be one of the many unintended consequences of the Industrial Revolution. In the four regions studied, the last 300 years have been an era of turbulent change on a colossal scale. By the end of the nineteenth century, the British Empire had spread to every corner of the world. The news coming back from frontier outposts consistently reported that insanity was rare or unknown in "primitive" societies, where folks enjoyed a far slower way of life. Long-term stability was the opposite of crazy. In Britain, a number of observers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were well aware of a growing insanity epidemic, and some actually linked it to civilization -- it was simply an acceptable cost for the wonders of progress, wealth, and luxury. Living in such amazing times over-excited the minds of those who were mentally fragile, and this was simply unavoidable. Some even saw rising insanity as a badge of honor, indisputable proof that civilization was thriving. Lunatic asylums were booming, praise the Lord!

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