

“Mad in America” (Bad Science, Bad Medicine and the Enduring Mistreatment of the Mentally Ill) Perseus Publishing December 2001

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This book “Mad in America” written by Robert Whittaker, who is an American Journalist and an author of several books, who deals mainly with medicine science and history.

This book is written in simple, comprehensible language traces the history of various treatments in Psychiatry and their unethicity over the years starting from 1750 to almost present day, written in 4 parts Part 1 The original Bedlam (1750-1900), Part II The Darkest Era (1900-1950), Part III Back to Bedlam (1950 - 1990) and part IV Mad Medicine to day (1990 till present) divided into 12 chapters and contains 334 pages available in a bound volume is a critical review of the emerging treatments in Psychiatry, it is a book to be read by every practicing psychiatrist which gives them an opportunity to introspect what they do to their patients is Ethical, and worthy or not. It may be reminding Psychiatrists that, are they acting as agents of big Pharma companies by being Prescription generators or concerned about care of their patients. The book clearly gives a message that mad people are victims of various physical treatments of their times. The book states that Progressive model of care with Community support and Moral treatment combined with human hand of kindness is still the best treatment for mentally ill with a judicious prescription of Anti Psychotics This book has rich references justifying the author’s statements and opinions about his critical out look of present day treatments; he substantiates his statements with relevant statistics of admissions to Mental asylums before and after the Antipsychotic drug era. Of particular interest to read are the chapters on Eugenics, Psycho surgery and Atypical anti psychotics where he traces carefully the history and describes the politics and political scenarios, and ambitious needs of those inventors and inventions.

“Mad in America” was named by Discover Magazine as one of the best science books of 2002; the American Library Association named it one of the best history books of that year.

N.B: I am particularly thankful to M/S Elizabeth Mayhew of Boston for the opportunity she provided me to read this book.

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