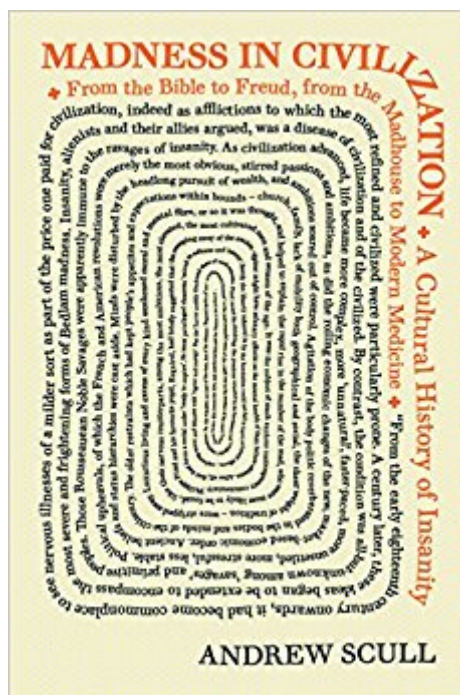


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Madness In Civilization: A Cultural History Of Insanity, From The Bible To Freud, From The Madhouse To Modern Medicine



Synopsis

The loss of reason, a sense of alienation from the commonsense world we all like to imagine we inhabit, the shattering emotional turmoil that seizes hold and won't let go—these are some of the traits we associate with madness. Today, mental disturbance is most commonly viewed through a medical lens, but societies have also sought to make sense of it through religion or the supernatural, or by constructing psychological or social explanations in an effort to tame the demons of unreason. *Madness in Civilization* traces the long and complex history of this affliction and our attempts to treat it. Beautifully illustrated throughout, *Madness in Civilization* takes readers from antiquity to today, painting a vivid and often harrowing portrait of the different ways that cultures around the world have interpreted and responded to the seemingly irrational, psychotic, and insane. From the Bible to Sigmund Freud, from exorcism to mesmerism, from Bedlam to Victorian asylums, from the theory of humors to modern pharmacology, the book explores the manifestations and meanings of madness, its challenges and consequences, and our varied responses to it. It also looks at how insanity has haunted the imaginations of artists and writers and describes the profound influence it has had on the arts, from drama, opera, and the novel to drawing, painting, and sculpture. Written by one of the world's preeminent historians of psychiatry, *Madness in Civilization* is a panoramic history of the human encounter with unreason.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Honorable Mention for the 2016 PROSE Award in Psychology, Association of American

Publishers One of Kirkus Reviews' Best Nonfiction Books of 2015 in History One of the New York

Postâ™s Favorite Books of 2015 One of Paste Magazineâ™s 30 Best Nonfiction Books of 2015

Sociologist and historian Andrew Scull is too rigorous a scholar to indulge in polemics. Instead, Mr. Scull has set himself the task of providing his readers with a clear, engaged and global overview of madness from the ancient world to the present . . . [his] tone is elegant; his scholarship, immaculate. The story he tells is riveting." --Joanna Bourke, Wall Street Journal

Scull's knowledge of music and art, cultural change, medicine, religion, and politics make this a great achievement in psychiatric historyâ [a] dynamic, readable chronicle and excellent reference."--Library Journal, starred review

[A] far-ranging, illuminating study of minds gone awry across space and time. . . . Scull is sharp on every point, but some of his best moments come when he explains the introduction of psychoanalysis into pop culture in the postwar period, thanks in good part to Hollywood, and when he takes a sidelong look at both the drug-dependent psychiatry of today and its discontents, such as Scientology. To be read as both corrective and supplement to Foucault, Szasz, and Rieff. Often brilliant and always luminous and rewarding."--Kirkus, starred review

Methodical yet always engrossing. . . . Scull's book is an outstanding illumination."--Oliver Kamm, Times of London

[A] powerful and disturbing book . . . fascinating . . . engrossing."--John Carey, Sunday Times

[Scull's] wide-ranging survey . . . chronologically presents factual and imaginative material about insanity. Scull, a historian of psychiatry for almost 40 years, has been well-served by his publishers, who have laid on more than 80 black-and-white images and almost 50 high-quality colour plates."--Sarah Wise, Financial Times

I've only just started Andrew Scull's *Madness in Civilization: A Cultural History of Insanity*, but already it's taught me a lot about unreason, in all its guises. . . . The in in Scull's title is a nice reproach to Foucault; we like to think of insanity as existing apart from, or before, the constructs of society--and certainly we try to put it there--but Scull's history unpacks centuries of our cultural baggage about madness, arguing that it's 'indelibly part of civilization, not located outside it.'"--Dan Piepenbring, Paris Review

[A] gigantic intellectual enterprise . . . what makes Scull so worth heeding is his reluctance to adopt a fixed position. Again and again, his drift is to emphasize how little we still know about mental disorders. He staunchly refuses to come down on the side of either biological or experiential explanations. . . . The standoff between the advocates of nature over nurture is very like that between materialism and religion. Both must surely be relevant to the complexity of human social experience. Thank goodness we have voices such as Andrew Scull's to keep us sane."--Salley Vickers, Telegraph

as illuminating as it is compendiousâ |a magisterial survey."--John Gray, New Statesman

[a] vast and rather brilliant book."--Matt Haig, Independent

Madness in Civilization is a landmark study, as authoritative as it is readable in its account of the devastatingly sad understory of human society. It's enraging, intensely unsparing

reading, but it's a masterpiece." ."--Steve Donoghue, Open Letters Monthly"[A] rich and thorough cultural history of madness from the Bible to Freud. . . . I couldn't put it down and have dog-eared almost every one of those 400 pages."--Susannah Cahalan, New York Post

In this centuries-spanning history, Andrew Scull reveals how mental illness was treated by numerous societies. . . . Madness in Civilization ultimately tears down the supposed barriers between society and the mentally ill, highlighting the many ways so-called 'madness' has been appropriated, marginalized and understood in the course of human history."--Bridey Heing, Paste Magazine

Scull is . . . keenly attuned to the larger social contexts in which madness was both experienced and influenced. . . . Scull provides an illuminating commentary on the broad social and cultural contexts in which madness has occurred. . . . [W]ell-crafted."--Raymond E. Fancher, PsycCRITIQUES

"Madness in Civilization entirely deserves the applause it has received. This is the best single volume yet written on the cultural history of madness, and it is also the synoptic masterpiece of Scull's career. . . . [A] rich, lucid, outstandingly good book, one that merits a place on the shelves of any practitioner, sufferer, or interested common reader."--Richard Barnett, Lancet Psychiatry

Andrew Scull, who teaches sociology and science studies at the University of California, San Diego, presents a comprehensive history of mental illness in his hefty but engaging volume. . . . A humane call to pay attention to lives that have been hidden, demonized, and stigmatized."--Ellen Painter Dollar, Christian Century

"[A] well-written and enjoyable book."--Alex Barnard, European Journal of Sociology

"Madness in Civilization is an impressive, mature and fluent book. It is a powerful work of cultural history and it contains much evidence from literature, art, film, music, physicians' writing and reflection, medical writing and more."--Catharine Coleborne, Medical History

"A wonderful book, fascinating and beautifully written, with Scull's usual verve and erudition. Madness in Civilization explores how ancient and medieval societies coped with psychosis and shows that, brain imaging and psychotropic drugs notwithstanding, modern psychiatry has much to learn from these societies."--Sylvia Nasar, author of A Beautiful Mind

"An engaging, learned, and wonderfully thought-provoking history of human efforts to understand and manage those behaviors we call mad. An uncommon combination of learning and accessible writing, Scull's admirable book is a must-read for anyone interested in this â ^most solitary of afflictions.'"--Charles Rosenberg, Harvard University

In this engrossing book, Scull takes us from ancient Greece to the pharmacopoeias of today to give us the long view of how reason has understood and treated unreason. This is history at its best, scintillating in its detail and passionate about a subject that

concerns us all."--Lisa Appignanesi, author of *Trials of Passion: Crimes in the Name of Love and Madness*"Madness in Civilization is a brilliant, provocative, and hugely entertaining history of the treatment and mistreatment of the mentally ill. Packed with bizarre details and disturbing facts, Andrew Scull's book offers fresh and compelling insights on the way medicine's inability to solve the mystery of madness has both haunted and shaped two thousand years of culture. Required reading for anyone who has ever gone to a shrink!"--Dirk Wittenborn, author of *Pharmakon*"Andrew Scull is the premier historian of psychiatry in the Anglophone world, and this book triumphantly demonstrates this. Taking a broad canvas, from antiquity to modernity, Scull dissects what madness has meant to societies throughout history and throughout the world. He writes with passion but humor, has a brilliant eye for a pungent quotation or a telling story, and holds the reader spellbound. This is a compelling book from a master of his craft."--William F. Bynum, coeditor of the *Dictionary of Medical Biography*"Dr. Scull is one of the preeminent historians of psychiatry in the world today. There is almost no one else who could write a volume of this kind with the panache he brings to it, the ability to hold both a lay and an academic readership in thrall at the same time, and the sense of balance and proportion that comes to some with experience but to others not at all. There is no other volume comparable to this in scope and this is a once in a generation effort."--David Healy, author of *Pharmageddon*"Andrew Scull is probably our most knowledgeable and certainly most readable historian of madness. In his new book, the magisterial *Madness in Civilization*, he presents a panoramic view of the subject that's both clear-eyed and critical. Crisply written, and furnished with a wealth of cultural and clinical reference, this is a great, tragic story."--Patrick McGrath, author of *Asylum*"A work of heroic scholarship, an eloquent overview of the changing theories and treatments of madness from ancient religion, medicine, and myth to contemporary neuroscience and psychopharmacology. Scull shows not only how writers, artists, and composers have taken madness as a muse, but also how the shifting symbolic forms of unreason are truly part of its history. Compendious and compassionate."--Elaine Showalter, professor emeritus, Princeton University, author of *The Female Malady*

This is an exceptional resource I added to my personal library. I am using it for research. Well done.

What a tough read! Very dense, yet interesting. Still though: whew!

Great resource for my studies.

Andrew Scull on the second page of the first chapter of his book, serving as an introduction I imagine, dismisses the premise of Thomas Szasz that "mental illness" is a myth, therefore, the words madness and "mental illness" are used almost interchangeably throughout this volume. Elsewhere he is neither so severe nor so judgmental towards dissident "mental health" professionals. Mention is made of French academic Michel Foucault on three occasions, and each mention is mockingly sarcastic. At one point, in criticizing Foucault, where he disputes Foucault's claim to a "great confinement" during the 16th century, I think this criticism stems from a misreading of Foucault. Yes, there was an asylum building boom in the nineteenth century and, yes, this asylum building increased the population of 'lunatics', and one would be very correct in calling it a 'great confinement', however certain events had to lead up to that 'great confinement', and one of them was the, in general, 'great confinement' of indigents and lumpen elements that preceded it, and allowed for the more concentrated confinement of 'lunatics' in the first place. Foucault's position changed somewhat over the years, and if a person does get a hold of the unabridged later edition of his thesis, it helps to follow up any such reading with a reading of *Psychiatric Power*, among his lecture series, for his revised view some 10 years later. Having been greatly influenced by both Szasz and Foucault I cannot in my right mind give *Madness in Civilization* 5 stars, but I will cede it 4. It was a better book, after the intro, than I thought it would be. After taking on Szasz and Foucault, in a history no less, I had thought maybe Scull was going to give vast praise to biological psychiatry and see some kind of pharmaceutical revolution as responsible for deinstitutionalization. This was not to be the case, and that's why I am able to give his book the 4 stars that I did. It would, after all, have not been entirely logical for Scull, as a sociology professor, to have done so. Also, I don't think he could have done so without lying a great deal more than anybody should. He deals with mad-doctoring before it became a medical specialty, and he deals with the psychiatric profession afterwards. He goes from Henry Cotton's seeing infection as the source of 'madness', to various forms of "shock" treatment, to Walter Freeman's icepick lobotomies when it comes to harmful practices. (It would be wrong, however, to pretend that all forms of shock treatment and surgical brain mutilation are no longer current.) He also goes into the current relationship of psychiatry (and madness) to the pharmaceutical industry, and the questions about efficacy and ethics that it raises. It may not convince anybody to change their views on the subject, all the same, it might be able to enhance their knowledge and enlighten them a little about the history of our views towards the mad. All in all, I would call his book a good and worthwhile read.

Wish it had footnotes instead of endnotes.

The management of mental illness, today, has come a long way within the past few decades from its early brutal, often barbaric, methods. As recently as the 1970s, electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) and frontal lobotomies were practiced on the insane; who were often left much worse off. Ernest Hemingway, after two series of ECT to cure his depression, became more despondent and committed suicide, two days after his release from the Mayo Clinic. Andrew Scull's book is a work of a sweeping range covering the history of madness from ancient times to the modern day, elucidating the encounter between madness and civilisation over more than two millennia. The depth and breadth of this tome is painstakingly culled from medical records, peer-reviewed articles and published reports, accepted psychiatric literature, religious texts and social studies supported by statistics, as well as history, creative writings and the arts. Previous books on the subject were often limited in their scope and some of their conclusions were erroneous. French philosopher and social theorist, Foucault's book *Folie et D raison: Histoire de la folie   l' ge classique*, based on his doctoral thesis, first published in 1961 in French, is such an example. An abridged, poorly translated English edition was published in 1967 as "Madness and Civilization", and a better translation of the complete work was published in 2006 as *History of Madness*. Foucault's book was very influential among American left-wing academics, but not so much in his native France, where he was heavily criticized by French psychologists for lack of accuracy and factual history of mental illness based on his argument that that society defines sane and insane behavior is an old clich  in cultural anthropology. This is refuted by studies, research and advances in cognitive science and psychiatry. Today, insanity is considered to be a pathology, an illness. Furthermore, Foucault's book is limited only to Western Europe from the Middle Ages to the 20th century; whereas Scull's oeuvre spans millennia, encompassing civilizations from Ancient Asia to Europe and everywhere in between. This book includes a broad range of concepts from medicine, history, art, religion, philosophy and literature as they influence social behavior and relate to the management of mental illness. Scull's book, formidable in its scope, tells us about the bizarre, often inhumane, treatment of those defined as insane in their contemporary societies; from diet, bleeding, purging, massage, frequent beatings, physical torture, brutal discipline, starvation, water treatments, group confinement or isolation, sensory deprivation, exorcism, genital mutilation to the more recent chemical shock with potent drugs like metrazol, strychnine, insulin and camphor that induce violent and painful physical and psychological reactions from acute terror and panic to convulsions. Electrical shocks to sensitive body parts caused severe pain,

convulsions, often cardiac arrhythmias and katatonic states. Arrhythmias sometimes resulted in death and convulsions often caused bones to dislocate or break. From the 1930s through the 1980s, metrazol storms, ECT and frontal lobotomies were practiced in waning frequency. Today, many, if not all, of these methods have been replaced by much better diagnostic and management tools such as psychoanalysis, CT and MRI brain scans and psychotropic medications. Throughout the ages, the definition and stigma of insanity varied according to the local mores and traditions and was often a convenient tool to wield when trying to be rid of inconvenient rivals, family members, political opponents and those "who act in ways that are profoundly at variance with the conventions and expectations of their culture". The causes of insanity were as varied as its treatments (mostly barbaric). The ancients believed it to be the influence of external forces; Yahweh displeasure, a curse from the gods or satanic possession. Hippocrates promulgated the theory of imbalance of the "body humors", which held well into the 16th century. Erasmus and Shakespeare link madness to lack of moral purity, while Emil Zola and Ibsen cite syphilis as the culprit (which in many cases was true). Psychological or physical traumatic experience was believed to trigger insanity and enhance creativity in artists/painters as the Englishman Richard Dadd (1817-76) and the Dutch Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890). Scull introduces a panoply of individuals associated with the management of mental illness with a few vignettes; the Americans Benjamin Rush (1746-1813) and Silas Weir Mitchell (1829-1914), French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-93) and the Austrian Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) et al. who devised different methods to deal with mental ailments from restrictive physical confinement, public humiliation to psychoanalysis. The book skips over a few contributors and is brief about others, but what it lacks in minutiae it makes up in precision of information. Scull does not overlook the plight of the mentally ill in modern society, often over-medicated, housed in sub-standard facilities, cared for by over-worked, underpaid and (often) poorly trained staff or released in community care. The true cause of mental illness is yet to be established. Treatment is often empirical, in spite of Big Pharma's plethora of hyped up palliative and therapeutic medications.

"Madness in Civilization" is a tour-de-force wide-ranging study of mental illness throughout the history of mankind, covered over 12 well-organized chapters, supported by multiple notes, a vast bibliography and about 130 illustrations (photos and color plates). Any brief review of this momentous work would be an injustice to its erudition. It should be read and savored in its entirety by anyone interested in psychology, social science, philosophy and history in general. BTW years ago, I read Michel Foucault's book in its original French. I found it lacking in historical breadth, stilted in its social assessments and often relying on folklore and fiction (Eg. the Ship of Fools definition). To compare it to Andrew Scull's book, in my

opinion, would be tantamount to comparing a Yugo to a Tesla.

The material covered is fascinating, but the writing is a little bland

I expected *Madness in Civilization* to be fascinating. A survey of the conception of insanity throughout the ages could hardly be anything but, and Scull's masterful (and thoroughly, gorgeously endnoted) research turns up gem after horrifying gem about the plight of the mad in society. (Fun fact: in the early 20th century, doctors tried treating insanity by infecting their patients with meningitis.) What I did not expect was for *Madness* to be as lovely as it is, with its almost-Saul-Bass cover design, solid weight (I'm a sucker for good paperstock), and color plates, which make it a treat for the senses as well as the intellect. Scull's writing style isn't up to the level of Andrew Solomon's or Kay Redfield Jamison's near-poetry, but his presentation is solid, clear, and well-paced. If I have any quibbles with his work at all, it's that I was deeply interested in the section on madness in the Ancient world, which -perhaps unsurprisingly - was the thinnest on actual historical information. Any disappointment I may have felt, however, was easily counteracted by the extreme awesome of his endnotes, which gave me enough suggested reading to keep me busy for the next few years. Gorgeous and fascinating, Scull's *Madness in Civilization* is a treat for anyone interested in history, psychology, or the things people do to each other in the name of science and public safety.

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