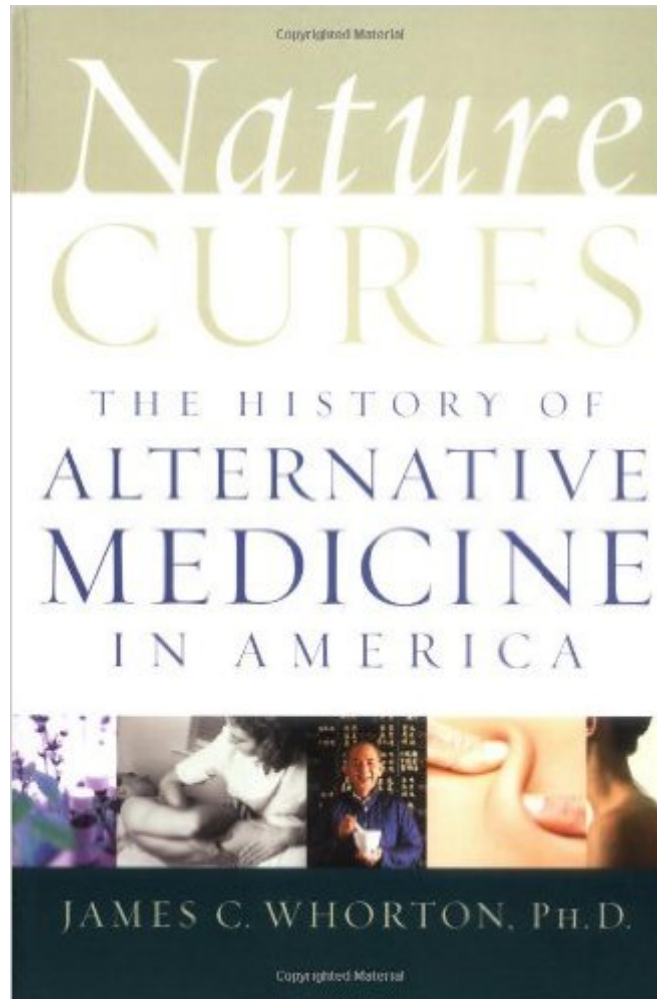


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Nature Cures: The History Of Alternative Medicine In America



Synopsis

From reflexology and rolfing to shiatsu and dream work, we are confronted today by a welter of alternative medical therapies. But as James Whorton shows in *Nature Cures*, the recent explosion in alternative medicine actually reflects two centuries of competition and conflict between mainstream medicine and numerous unorthodox systems. This is the first comprehensive history of alternative medicine in America, examining the major systems that have emerged from 1800 to the present. Writing with wit and with fairness to all sides, Whorton offers a fascinating look at alternative health systems such as homeopathy, water cures, Mesmerism, Christian Science, osteopathy, chiropractic, naturopathy, and acupuncture. He highlights the birth and growth of each system (including European roots where appropriate) and vividly describes both the theories and the therapies developed within each system, including such dubious practices as hour-long walks barefoot in snow or Samuel Thompson's "puking and steaming" regimen. In particular, Whorton illuminates the philosophy of "natural healing" that has been espoused by alternative practitioners throughout history and the distinctive interpretations of "nature cure" developed by the different systems. Though he doesn't hesitate to point out the failings of these systems, he also shows that some "cult medicines" have eventually won recognition from practitioners of mainstream medicine. Throughout, Whorton writes with a light touch and quotes from contemporary humorists such as Mark Twain. His book is an engaging and authoritative history that highlights the course of alternative medicine in the U.S., providing valuable background to the wide range of therapies available today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Nature Cures presents the history of alternative medicine in America, showing that the recent rise of alternative medicine actually reflects two centuries of competition between mainstream medicine and unorthodox systems. In providing a running history of alternative medicine, author James Whorton enables readers to analyze the progress, successes and failures of both traditional and alternative treatments.

The value of this book to me is the historical context of the sometime strained relationship between natural medicine and "western medicine". History indeed repeats itself. Natural, alternative medicine grew out of a disenchantment with traditional medicine. As today, people began searching for answers other than what they were receiving from their doctors. The stories are informative and illuminating and really help one understand the chasm between the two worlds. I have not completed the book so I am simply at the stage of understanding the problem. I hope the book offers some type of solution that allows these polarized sides with similar hope for outcomes to work together on what might get us out of the healthcare crisis we are currently in.

The book was just what I needed, not in bad shape, and for a great price. Thank you!

Vitalism is a profoundly science-ejected concept, though many CAM or 'natural health' cabals falsely claim that vitalism survives scientific scrutiny. I quote: "naturopathic medical practice nevertheless is still comprised of distinctive therapies backed by faith in nature [...] detoxification, like all other therapies, is meant to serve the more basic purpose of strengthening the vis medicatrix. Naturopathy still means trusting in nature to cure [...] 'confidence in the perception of a vital force or life force.' Hence, today's hydrotherapy procedures are justified in terms that Lust, or even Thrall, would commend: hydrotherapy provides 'general stimulation of the vital force' [...] naturopathic medicine thus retains much of the old in its now 'science based natural medicine' [p.291]. "When is an article of faith unprofessionally / falsely labeled a medical scientific fact? Naturopathy. CAM: there be monsters here. -r.c.

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