ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Idea of this work originated from a personal angst within me. I have spent the major part of my life in the field of psychiatry, first as a student in the academic arena and later, over last two decades, as a practitioner and occasionally as a teacher. Throughout these long years, I have experienced a kind of anxiety and perplexity. This discomfort had two sources. First, from facing an undercurrent of criticism, at times, prevailing in certain sections of society, that what we are doing towards and for our patients may not be based on sound knowledge and may, actually, be harmful for our patients. Second, practice of psychiatry often necessitates actions against the patients’ expressed choice to refuse our interventions. This overriding of patients’ autonomy is always problematic and can be undertaken only if psychiatric knowledge base can be accepted as valid and reliable. This dilemma and angst prompted me, at this late age, to explore these issues and to undertake this work.

My unending gratitude is towards my teacher and guide for this work, Dr Soumitra Basu. When I first approached him with a, till then, a very rudimentary idea, he immediately agreed, without a demur, to help me and guide me through this work. Notwithstanding his very heavy daily workload, he has always lent a patient hearing and helped with suggestions from his wonderful insights and profound erudition. I am doubly indebted to Dr. Basu for offering me, after my decades long marooning from academic world, to enjoy the warmth of the vibrant academic atmosphere of Jadavpur University Philosophy Department through participation in seminars, workshops, study groups etc.

I am indebted to all the teachers of this department and I express my special thanks to all the friends of the Counseling Centre of this department.
Prof Madhabendra Nath Mitra is always solicitous, helpful and supporting. Frequent snippets from his awesome erudition and wisdom have enriched me. I must offer my sincere thanks to Sujata Roychoudhury who always smilingly accepted my appeal for help on the nuances of computer handling and access to various library resources.

Lastly, none of this would have been possible for me if it were not for the presence of my friend Swarup Gupta. Continuous support, help, encouragement, active participation in doubts and discussions and the unfltering loving care are cherished possessions for me.

Debashis Chatterjee