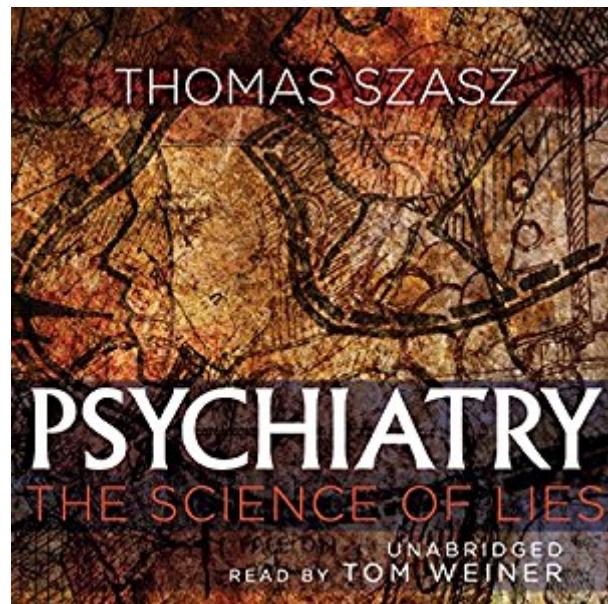


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# Psychiatry: The Science Of Lies



## Synopsis

For more than half a century, Thomas Szasz has devoted much of his career to a radical critique of psychiatry. His latest work, *Psychiatry: The Science of Lies*, is a culmination of his life's work: to portray the integral role of deception in the history and practice of psychiatry. Szasz argues that the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness stands in the same relationship to the diagnosis and treatment of bodily illness that the forgery of a painting does to the original masterpiece. Art historians and the legal system seek to distinguish forgeries from originals. Those concerned with medicine, on the other hand - physicians, patients, politicians, health-insurance providers, and legal professionals - take the opposite stance when faced with the challenge of distinguishing everyday problems in living from bodily diseases, systematically authenticating non-diseases as diseases. The boundary between disease and non-disease - genuine and imitation, truth and falsehood - thus becomes arbitrary and uncertain. There is neither glory nor profit in correctly demarcating what counts as medical illness and medical healing from what does not. Individuals and families wishing to protect themselves from medically and politically authenticated charlatanry are left to their own intellectual and moral resources to make critical decisions about human dilemmas miscategorized as "mental diseases" and about medicalized responses misidentified as "psychiatric treatments." Delivering his sophisticated analysis in lucid prose and with a sharp wit, Szasz continues to engage and challenge readers of all backgrounds. Thomas Szasz is professor emeritus of psychiatry at the State University of New York's Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, New York.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This collection goes beyond Szasz's other books in discussing what actually goes on in psychotherapy, absolving neither patient (so-called) or analyst (ditto). A little (though not completely) disjointed, but always thought-provoking; includes material on the modern system of "this drug must do this because the patient does thus as long as we give it to him." Interesting to compare with Theodore Dalrymple's observations on drugs and the rational calculations of supposedly irrational actors (and therapists who pretend to believe them). And, like Dalrymple, a model of clear, effective prose writing. Highly recommended for the open-minded.

This is one of the most enlightening, profound, and important books I have ever read. Pithy and devoid of fluff, Dr. Szasz' words resonate with the undeniable ring of truth. If my electronic highlighter could be worn out, it would have met its doom with these pages. The emperor stands naked indeed.

This is a great book. I found it to be funny, honest, courageous, intelligent, interesting, and enjoyable to read. If my memory serves me (I read it cover to cover not longer after it was released) in it, Thomas Szasz advocates for outlawing civil commitment and the insanity defense, the foundations of institutional psychiatry and psychiatric slavery.

Szasz continues to push me into rethinking about the nature and characteristic of mental illness. Whether it is the "science of lies" or the "lies of science," Szasz holds out on the essential premise that we are moral agents. According to Szasz, present psychiatry diminishes that agency when both practitioner and the culture sees the illness as the agent not the person.

Well worth the read, read it and work things out for yourself.

Iconoclastic clinician Dr. Szasz disputes the popular notion that "mental illness" is a concept based in clinical reality that can be "treated" like a real, physical illness or an organic brain defect.

Dr. Szasz makes a case that psychiatrists have tried to make a science out of the study of mental illness and failed. Dr. Szasz has been attacking the profession for 30 years or more. This short book can probably be looked at as his final effort to show why the profession should not be considered a science. He directs his attack at those claiming mental illness and those in the psychiatric profession

who legitimatize their 'illnesses'. I ordered this book after having just finished Anatomy of An Epidemic: Magic Bullets, Psychiatric Drugs, and the Astonishing Rise of Mental Illness in America by Robert Whitaker. This is another attack on psychiatrists along with their collusion with the pharmaceutical industry. Psychiatrist would not want you to read either book.

My son is currently being forced into permanent drugs. Szasz has opened my eyes to the current situation in psychiatry. Thank you Thomas Szasz.

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