



# Psychiatry: The Science of Lies

*Thomas Szasz*

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## **Psychiatry: The Science of Lies** Thomas Szasz

For more than a half century Thomas Szasz has devoted much of his career to a thorough and provocative critique of the practice of psychiatry. In many ways 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 stands to the original masterpiece. Art historians, museum directors, private collectors, and the legal system all 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 diseases of the body, systematically authenticating nondiseases as diseases. The boundary between disease and nondisease - genuine and imitation, original and copy, truth and falsehood - thus becomes arbitrary, shifting, and uncertain. With a wealth of well-researched new evidence, Szasz examines the ways in which dishonesty and misrepresentation have permeated all aspects of psychiatric practice: the doctors, the patients, and even at times those who work to uncover psychiatric abuse. Delivering his sophisticated analysis in lucid prose and with a sharp wit, Szasz continues to engage and challenge readers of all backgrounds.

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