



Our Necessary Shadow: The Nature and Meaning of Psychiatry

Tom Burns

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The first attempt in forty years to explain the full subject of psychiatry, from one of the world's experts.

In what will be a tour de force in the field of psychiatry in all its complexity and depth, this important new volume explores the essential paradox of psychiatry?and offers a balanced understanding of its history and development in the medical world. Much is written about psychiatry, but very little that describes psychiatry itself. Why should there be such a need? For good or ill, psychiatry is a polemical battleground, criticized on the one hand as an instrument of social control, while on the other the latest developments in neuroscience are trumpeted as lasting solutions to mental illness.

Which of these strikingly contrasting positions should we believe? This is the first attempt in a generation to explain the whole subject of psychiatry. in this deeply thoughtful, descriptive, and sympathetic book, Tom Burns reviews the historical development of psychiatry, throughout alert to where psychiatry helps, and where it is imperfect. What is clear is that mental illnesses are intimately tied to what makes us human in the first place. and the drive to relieve the suffering they cause is even more human.

Psychiatry, for all its flaws, currently represents our best attempt to discharge this most human of impulses. it is not something we can just ignore. it is our necessary shadow.

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