

# Topic paper 4

Psychology



Is mental illness a myth? This question may be in itself neither insane nor capricious. However, in most occasions, an individual can convincingly differentiate normal from abnormal behaviors since the evidence regarding the same is never compelling. For instance, it is common to read about a murder trial whereby an equally eminent psychiatrist from the prosecution side of defense contradicts the defense's eminent psychiatrist on the matter of sanity of the defendant. In other words, there is varied conflicting or contradicting data on the utility, reliability, and the meaning of the terms as such insanity, sanity, schizophrenia, and mental illness. Finally, in the year 1934, a Benedict named Ruth suggested that matters of normality and abnormality are never universal (Slater 65). That is, what might be regarded by a culture to normal may quite aberrant to another culture; therefore, mental illness is a myth but not a medical disorder.

Accordingly, Thomas Szasz regards mental illness as a myth. In his argument, Szasz states that psychiatrists often exploit mental illness in making ethical and political decisions. Moreover, Laing once claimed that labels or mental illnesses are usually used by the society to control some people through improving violence. These arguments often eliminate biological and physical consideration of mental illness as a behavioral disorder (Slater 72). They completely separate behavior and biology, behavior and brain, as well as mental and physical. Thus, mental diseases are never considered within biological science. For instance, Szasz argues that psychiatrists often confuse neurological disorders and physical diseases with mental diseases.

Rosenhan once conducted a study that he termed " Being Sane in Insane Places" (Szasz 54). Being a psychologist, he placed eight sane or normal

people in mental hospital as " pseudo-patients". Initially, these people were diagnosed with schizophrenic and later these patients appeared normal on second diagnosis (Rosenhan and Perry London 95). This study is an indication that mental illness is a myth or creation, but not a disease related to biological disorders.

#### Works Cited

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