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Nota di contenuto	Cover -- Chemicals for the Mind -- Contents -- Preface -- Acknowledgments -- Introduction -- NOTES -- chapter 1 SCIENCE, MORALITY, AND THE OBLIGATIONS OF CONSCIOUSNESS -- PERSONAL PROBLEMS AND IMPERSONAL PILLS -- PHILOSOPHICAL INFRASTRUCTURE -- ONTOLOGICAL COMMITMENTS -- PROFESSIONAL IMPLICATIONS -- FAMILY IMPLICATIONS -- THE OBLIGATIONS OF CONSCIOUSNESS -- NOTES -- chapter 2 ON DUALISM Why Psychology Needs Philosophy -- DESCARTES' DUALISM -- NINETEENTH- CENTURY MORAL THERAPY -- CONTEMPORARY IDEAS -- UNDERCUTTING DUALISM -- NOTES -- chapter 3 PSYCHOLOGY'S STRUGGLE WITH DUALISM -- MENTAL SCIENCE -- EARLY MENTAL SCIENCE -- GESTALT PSYCHOLOGY -- PSYCHOANALYSIS -- THE COGNITIVE REVOLUTION -- PSYCHOSOMATIC MEDICINE -- PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY -- FUNCTIONAL LANGUAGE -- RESOLUTION? -- NOTES -- chapter 4 ON BIOLOGICAL REDUCTIONISM Culture and Ideology -- CAUSAL FACTORS IN PSYCHOPATHOLOGY -- IS THIS A PROFESSIONAL CRISIS? -- IS THIS A PHILOSOPHICAL CRISIS? -- DESCRIBING ANEW -- NOTES -- chapter 5 DUALISM AND OBJECTIFICATION -- WHAT ARE WE TO DO WITH

CONSCIOUSNESS? -- Enacting Dualism -- Denying Dualism --
RESISTANCE TO TECHNOLOGY -- THE COSTS OF MASTERING NATURE
-- MEDICALIZATION OF MADNESS -- NOTES -- chapter 6
OBJECTIFICATION AND VIOLENCE -- PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGICAL
THEORY -- METAPHORS IN PSYCHIATRIC PRACTICE -- NONVIOLENT
HELP -- WHEN IS PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY NOT HELPFUL? -- SOME
IMPLICATIONS -- NOTES -- chapter 7 INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE IN
PSYCHIATRY AND PSYCHOLOGY -- ORIENTALISM -- CONCEALMENT --
AN EXPERT PSYCHIATRY -- AN ALTERNATIVE TO VIOLENCE --
CONCLUSIONS -- NOTES -- chapter 8 QUESTIONING PSYCHOLOGICAL
MODERNITY -- PSYCHOLOGICAL MODERNITY -- FROM JAMES TO
ECOLOGY³ -- FROM ECOLOGY TO PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY -- IS
PSYCHOPHARMACOLOGY IMMORAL? -- ANTICIPATING THE FUTURE --
NOTES -- References -- Index.

Sommario/riassunto

Silently orienting us to the world are traditions embedded in our language. These traditions shape how we understand the necessities and possibilities of life and truth. Dualism, a metaphysical theory, is such a tradition, and, in Keen's view, the separate discourses of science and morality create double meanings in our experience. Psychopharmacology is a critical intersection of these two worlds, where physical compounds are used to change mental life. Increasingly, the language of neurochemistry formulates that treatment. To control ennui with chemicals is to direct our attention away from what is wrong in our lives and to focus instead on what we can control easily, by taking a pill. Mental life has become marginal in biologically reductionistic discourse. While the demystification of human consciousness is surely a cornerstone of modernity, in excess it indulges a world design where nothing is sacred and everything becomes just another phenomenon to which we owe nothing. Our practice of manipulating consciousness as an object surrenders the complex reflections of moral ambiguity and struggle. Following the example of our doctors, Keen asserts, we the population neglect what is wrong in our lives. Like the rest of nature, our minds become exploitable. And properties of consciousness become commodities sold by prescription in drug stores. A provocative analysis of psychopharmacology this will be of interest to treatment professionals, from psychologists, psychiatrists, and nurses to social workers, as well as the interested public.
