

## BOOK REVIEW

### A Commentary on, Psychopathology: Theory, Perspectives and Future Approaches. (2013). Stoyanov, D. (Ed.). New York: Nova Science Publishers. ISBN 978-1-62618-470-1

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This edited volume is a welcome addition to the growing literature on philosophical psychopathology. Stoyanov has done a magisterial job in marshaling a wide range of contributors and topics into a well-organized and thematically coherent book. There are 16 chapters, arranged in four sections, helpfully described by Stoyanov in his Preface. Section I draws on insights from philosophy, sociology and the wider humanities to examine psychopathology in both its lay and technical sense. Sections II and III cohere around Jasper's distinction of 'explanation' and 'understanding' and how such approaches can be utilized to understand the nature of mental disorders, to classify them and to understand their nature with reference to neuroscience and other scientific approaches. Section IV offers chapters detailing novel empirical approaches to psychopathology.

The papers are all very well written, with clear references at the end of each contribution and a useful index at the end of the volume. Several papers appealed to me in particular, given my own research interests. Muscelli (Chapter 1) explores in his contribution the continuing tension in psychiatry between its being an objective science and a science of the person and draws usefully on the work of Erwin Straus and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, concluding with insights from Husserl on the life-world and Sartre (in his work on Flaubert). In his contribution, Varga (Chapter 4) develops an analysis of what psychiatric illnesses are, utilizing the concept of 'natural kinds' from the philosophy of science and the work of Peter Zachar and Ian Hacking. Varga suggests that psychiatric disorders are not natural kinds, but could be

viewed as practical and/or interactive kinds. Stoyanov's own contribution (Chapter 6) addresses the topic of translational validation - that is to say, exploring the validity of the constructs of psychopathology by how measures purported to measure that construct (whether questionnaire, neuroscientific, *etc.*) correlate, independent of explanatory level. Korf's paper (Chapter 11) commences with a fascinating account of historical conception of materialism of mind and the relationship between mind and brain, in a discussion of Kraepelin, Freud, Searle and the Eliminative Materialism of the Churchlands. He then goes on to explore mood transitions and depressive illness in relation to brain networks and stochastic processes. The chapter concludes by drawing parallels with the approach outlined and that of Kendler and his views of rich pluralistic explanatory frameworks in psychiatric illness. Akabaliev and colleagues (Chapter 12) go beyond the study of established psychopathology in their review and discussion of markers of risk and endophenotypes, discussing candidates from neurophysiology, neuroimaging, brain anatomy, connectomics, as well as minor physical anomalies.

In summary, this volume is a rich collection of papers that is of great credit to the Editor Professor Drozdtoij Stoyanov and his contributors. As a whole, it offers a sophisticated approach to psychopathology, drawing on a wide range of approaches working in synchrony. This book would be of interest to mental health clinicians and researchers, but also philosophers, social scientists and historians interested in psychiatry and its disorders.