

Philosophical Issues in Psychiatry


By *Kenneth S Kendler, Josef Parnas*




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This multidisciplinary collection explores three key concepts underpinning psychiatry—explanation, phenomenology, and nosology—and their continuing relevance in an age of neuroimaging and genetic analysis.

An introduction by Kenneth S. Kendler lays out the philosophical grounding of psychiatric practice. The first section addresses the concept of explanation, from the difficulties in describing complex behavior to the categorization of psychological and biological causality. In the second section, contributors discuss experience, including the complex and vexing issue of how self-agency and free will affect mental health. The third and final section examines the organizational difficulties in psychiatric nosology and the instability of the existing diagnostic system. Each chapter has both an introduction by the editors and a concluding comment by another of the book's contributors. Contributors: John Campbell, Ph.D.; Thomas Fuchs, M.D., Ph.D.; Shaun Gallagher, Ph.D.; Kenneth S. Kendler, M.D.; Sandra D. Mitchell, Ph.D.; Dominic P. Murphy, Ph.D.; Josef Parnas, M.D., Dr.Med.Sci.; Louis A. Sass, Ph.D.; Kenneth F. Schaffner, M.D., Ph.D.; James F. Woodward, Ph.D.; Peter Zachar, Ph.D.

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Editorial Review

Review

"This is a serious and important book... it is certainly one that researchers, scholars and anyone involved in trying to explain the nature of psychiatric disorders to a skeptical audience ought to read."

(*British Journal of Psychiatry*)

"This book asks the right questions, and sends us in the right direction."

(S. Nassir Ghaemi, M.D., M.A., M.P.H. *Metapsychology*)

"A good collection of papers... Will be of most interest to specialists in the area of philosophy of psychiatry (and to philosophers of mind and psychology)"

(Rachel Cooper *Metapsychology*)

"Kendler and Parnas undertake this exploration in a readable, cogent manner in *Philosophical Issues in Psychiatry*... The authors go to great lengths to ensure that the book is accessible for those with a limited background in philosophy."

(Geoffrey Neimark, M.D. *American Journal of Psychiatry*)

"Few books on psychiatry explore with seriousness and clarity the difficult problems of explanation, scientific description, and causality. This one does. The introductions are like having an articulate and patient professor at your shoulder. The material is discussed by first-rate people in their fields, and the commentaries prevent the discussion from becoming static or predictable. I hope this sophisticated book will be read widely and considered carefully."

(John Z. Sadler, M.D., editor of *Descriptions and Prescriptions: Values, Mental Disorders, and the DSMs*)

From the Back Cover

This multidisciplinary collection explores three key concepts underpinning psychiatry?explanation, phenomenology, and nosology?and their continuing relevance in an age of neuroimaging and genetic analysis.

This book opens with Dr. Kenneth S. Kendler's introduction to the philosophical grounding of psychiatric practice. Chapters in the first section of the book then address the concept of explanation, from the difficulties in describing complex behavior to the categorization of psychological and biological causality. In the second section, contributors discuss experience, including the complex and vexing issue of how self-agency and free will affect mental health. The third and final section examines the organizational difficulties in psychiatric nosology and the instability of the existing diagnostic system. Each chapter includes both an

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Kenneth S. Kendler, MD, is the Rachel Brown Banks Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry at the Medical College of Virginia, where he is also a professor of human genetics and the director of the Virginia Institute for Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics. He is the author of *Genes, Environment, and Psychopathology*.

Josef Parnas, MD, DrMedSci, is a professor of psychiatry and the consultant medical director for the Department of Psychiatry at Copenhagen University. He is the codirector of the National Danish Research Foundation's Center for Subjectivity Research.

About the Author

Kenneth S. Kendler, MD, is the Rachel Brown Banks Distinguished Professor of Psychiatry at the Medical College of Virginia, where he is also a professor of human genetics and the director of the Virginia Institute for Psychiatric and Behavioral Genetics. He is the author of *Genes, Environment, and Psychopathology*.

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