

**PSYCHIATRY IN CRISIS:**

**At the Crossroads of Social Science, the Humanities, and Neuroscience**

**Vincenzo Di Nicola, MPhil, MD, PhD**

and

**Drozdtoj S. Stoyanov, MD, PhD**

Springer Publishing  
New York  
2018

## PSYCHIATRY IN CRISIS:

### At the Crossroads of Social Science, the Humanities, and Neuroscience

#### *Premise of the volume:*

The field of academic psychiatry is in crisis, everywhere.

It is not merely a health crisis of resource scarcity or distribution, competing claims and practice models, or level of development from one country to another, but a deeper, more fundamental crisis about the very definition and the theoretical basis of psychiatry.

The kinds of questions that represent this crisis include whether psychiatry is a *social science* (like psychology or anthropology), whether it is better understood as part of *the humanities* (like philosophy, history and literature), or if the future of psychiatry is best assured as a *branch of medicine* (privileging *genetics* and *neuroscience*)? In fact, the question often debated since the beginning of modern psychiatry concerns the *biomedical model* so that part of psychiatry's perpetual self-questioning is to what extent it is or is not a branch of medicine.

Critical psychiatrists have been casting about for a new model in every generation. Since the foundations of modern psychiatry as a medical discipline in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, psychiatrist Karl Jaspers introduced phenomenology from philosophy as a fundamental part of contemporary psychiatry. Every generation since then has introduced other humanities and social sciences, with the flourishing of many schools of psychotherapies, the introduction of sociology and anthropology which created branches like social and cultural psychiatry, and an always intimate relationship with psychology. Meanwhile the intimate relationship between psychiatry and *Continental or European philosophy and critical theory* continued, posing key *existential* questions about meaning and *ontological* questions about being. Along with other trends, this culminated in the *antipsychiatry* movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

In parallel, following psychiatry's Linnaeus, Emil Kraepelin who established the modern basis for psychiatric classification and nomenclature, there has been a more rigorous project to establish a scientific basis for psychiatric diagnosis, using increasingly sophisticated methodologies for research. A key text by a leading researcher in Kraepelin's footsteps is Samuel Guze's *Why Psychiatry Is A Branch of Medicine*. Now, this approach has dovetailed with advances in *epidemiology, brain or neurosciences and genetics* to produce the *neuroscience model* of psychiatry, emblematic of the influential US National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) whose mantra is "mind is brain." This approach to psychiatry in turn also has philosophical schools in the Anglo-American tradition of *analytic philosophy* and *philosophy of science* supporting its approach to questions about mind as a progressive scientific project focusing on the brain. The "decade of the brain" declared in the 1990s in the US with increased funding for the NIMH culminated in a Nobel Prize for psychiatrist Eric Kandel's neuroscientific research on memory in 2000.

Not all researchers in the allied fields of psychology, psychiatry and neuroscience – so that a prominent psychologist Jerome Kagan made *An Argument for Mind*. Arguing from the perspective of cultural psychiatry, the influential Arthur Kleinman pleaded for *Rethinking Psychiatry*. Furthermore, the classification system called the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of the American Psychiatric Association (APA) now in its fifth edition and an ongoing progeny of Kraepelin has been hotly contested as a “mere dictionary” by the NIMH whose research project pursued genetic predispositions and neural substrates in the brain as the explanatory model for mind.

From psychiatry in crisis as a medical discipline to critical psychiatry casting for a new model, what will be the result? Will it be the *end of psychiatry* or its *renaissance* as something new and different, either as a more comprehensive theory and practice of human being or as a new branch of medicine called the neurosciences?

This unique and bold volume will offer a representative and critical survey of the history of modern psychiatry with deeply informed transdisciplinary readings of the literature and practices of the field by two professors of psychiatry who are active in practice and engaged in research and have dual training in scientific psychiatry and philosophy. In alternating chapters presenting contrasting arguments for the future of psychiatry, the two authors will conclude with a dialogue between them to flesh out the theoretical, research and practical implications of psychiatry’s current crisis, outlining areas of divergence, consensus and fruitful collaborations to revision psychiatry today. The volume will be scrupulously documented but written in accessible language with capsule summaries of key areas of theory, research and practice for the student and specialist alike in the social and human sciences and in medicine, psychiatry, and the neurosciences.

***Principal authors:***

The two principal authors are both professors of psychiatry with mainstream academic training, activities and appointments in respected university departments of psychiatry. Both also share professional training and engaged activities in the philosophy of psychiatry. Both Europeans, one working in Europe, the other in North America, Professors Stoyanov and Di Nicola are active in national and international organizations and together bring varied international expertise to this study. From these informed perspectives, Di Nicola and Stoyanov pose some fundamental epistemological and ontological questions about the crisis of psychiatry, what they imply, and how to go about resolving them to renew psychiatry today.

Vincenzo Di Nicola, MPhil, MD, PhD  
Tenured Full Professor, Dept. of Psychiatry  
University of Montreal

Drozdstoj Stoyanov, MD, PhD, PGCert  
Professor, Dept. of Psychiatry and Medical Psychology  
Medical University of Plovdiv

*Proposed Table of Contents:*

**Foreword (by a psychiatrist or a philosopher)**

**Preface/Introduction by DSS & VDN**

**Part I: Psychiatry in Crisis as a Medical Discipline – DS Stoyanov**

1. Methods for clinical evaluation in psychiatry: quantitative decomposition of narratives vs. qualitative approach. Reconstruction of the methodological discrepancies based on an exemplary case: Major Depressive Disorder
2. Psychiatric nosology revisited: at the crossroads of psychology and medicine. Categorical vs. dimensional; nomothetic vs. ideographic classification and nomenclature; post-modern perspectives
3. Psychiatry and neuroscience: at the interface. How to incorporate scientific data from neuroscience without turning psychiatry into an applied branch of neurology

*Invited commentary/commentaries*

**Part II: Critical Psychiatry – V Di Nicola**

1. The Beginning of the End of Psychiatry: A Philosophical Archaeology  
Psychology: Introspection and Consciousness  
Foundations of Modern Psychiatry  
Schizophrenia: The Worm in Psychiatry's Apple
2. The End of Phenomenology  
"Who Killed Ellen West?"  
A Critical Review of Ludwig Binswanger's Foundational Case of Existential Analysis
3. The End of Psychiatry  
"Psychiatry Against Itself"  
A Philosophical Archaeology of Antipsychiatry

*Invited commentary/commentaries*

**Part III: Renewal in Psychiatry - Stoyanov in Dialogue with Di Nicola**

*Invited commentary/commentaries*

**Afterword (by a psychiatrist or a philosopher)**