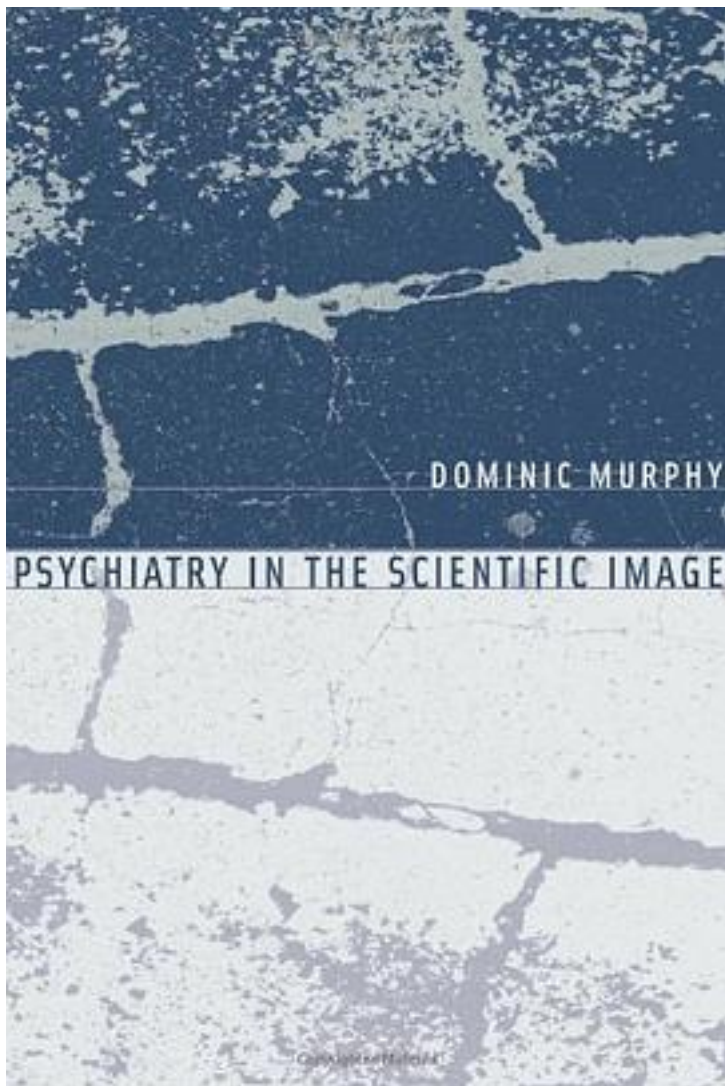# Psychiatry in the Scientific Image

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In Psychiatry in the Scientific Image, Dominic Murphy looks at psychiatry from the viewpoint of analytic philosophy of science, considering three issues: how we should conceive of, classify, and explain mental illness. If someone is said to have a mental illness, what about it is mental? What makes it an illness? How might we explain and classify it? A system of psychiatric classification settles these questions by distinguishing the mental illnesses and showing how they stand in relation to one another. This book explores the philosophical issues raised by the project of explaining and classifying mental illness.If we are to classify mental illness properly, we must look for causal explanations of what is being classified. Murphy proposes building a methodological framework for explaining mental disorders that lets psychiatry take advantage of, and contribute to, developments in the cognitive sciences. Murphy argues that the current literature on mental illness -- exemplified by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders -- is an impediment to research; it lacks a coherent concept of the mental and a satisfactory account of disorder, and yields too much authority to commonsense thought about the mind. He argues that the explanation of mental illness should meet the standards of good explanatory practice in the cognitive neurosciences, and that the classification of mental disorders should group symptoms into conditions based on the causal structure of the normal mind. If psychiatry is the study of failures of normal human nature, Murphy writes, then it will be on sounder footing if it aims for consilience with the sciences of the normal mind/brain.

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