



Classifying Madness: A Philosophical Examination of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Philosophy and Medicine)

Rachel Cooper

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This book is about the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, more commonly known as the D.S.M. The D.S.M. is published by the American Psychiatric Association and aims to list and describe all mental disorders. Within its pages can be found diagnostic criteria for types of depression, types of schizophrenia, eating disorders, anxiety disorders, phobias, sleeping disorders, and so on. Also included are less familiar, and more controversial, conditions: Mathematics Disorder, Caffeine Intoxication, Nicotine Dependence, Nightmare Disorder. It must be admitted that the D.S.M. is not an exciting read. Its pages follow a standard format: Each disorder has a numerical code. This is followed by a description of the disorder, which includes information regarding prevalence, course, and differential diagnosis. Finally explicit criteria that patients must meet to receive the diagnosis are listed. These generally include lists of the symptoms that must be present, restrictions as to the length of time that the symptoms must have been troublesome, and clauses that state that the symptoms must not be better accounted for by some other condition.

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