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## ІНТРОСПЕКЦІЯ ПСИХІЧНИХ ЗАХВОРЮВАНЬ ПЛІЧ-О-ПЛІЧ З ЕТИКО-ЛІНГВІСТИЧНИМИ ТА ПСИХОЛОГІЧНИМИ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯМИ

(Огляд дослідження: Nathan Carlin, N. (2022).

*Pathographies of Mental Illness. Series: Elements in Bioethics and Neuroethics.*  
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

**Анастасія Коменда**

Національний університет “Львівська політехніка”

ORCID: 0009-0009-1240-6482

*anastasiia.komenda.fl.2021@lpnu.ua*

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Розглянуто працю професора та доктора філософії Натана Карліна про історії людей із психічними захворюваннями, написані ними, у порівнянні з клінічною інформацією. Проаналізовано доречність та коректність подання інформації для широкого загалу, людей із згаданими захворюваннями та фахівців з галузі психології та психіатрії. Попри ніби суто психіатричний зміст, праця Натана Карліна є етико-лінгвістичним дослідженням психічних захворювань, що залучає її у ширшу сферу дискусій у галузі прикладної етики, лінгвістичної філософії та філософії психології.

**Ключові слова:** Натан Карлін, патографія, психічні захворювання, клінічна інформація, прикладна етика, філософія психології.

### INTROSPECTION OF MENTAL ILLNESS SIDE BY SIDE WITH ETHICAL, LINGUISTICAL, AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH<sup>20</sup>

(Review of: Nathan Carlin, N. (2022). *Pathographies of Mental Illness. Series: Elements in Bioethics and Neuroethics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.)

**Anastasiia Komenda**

Lviv Polytechnic National University

ORCID ID: 0009-0009-1240-6482

*anastasiia.komenda.fl.2021@lpnu.ua*

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The review examines the work of Nathan Carlin on the stories of people with mental illnesses written by them in comparison with clinical information from the fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. The appropriateness and correctness of the information for the general public, people with these diseases, and specialists in the field of psychology and psychiatry were analysed. Despite its seemingly purely psychiatric content, Nathan Carlin's work is an ethical-linguistic study of mental illness, which involves it in a wider field of discussions in the field of applied ethics, linguistic philosophy, and philosophy of psychology.

**Key words:** Nathan Carlin, applied ethics, pathography, mental illness, clinical information, philosophy of psychology.

The main idea and focus of *Pathographies of Mental Illness* are formed laconically and accurately,

with no room left for ill-consideration or uncertainty about the following material. “The purpose of this Element is to offer a survey of the field of pathographies of mental illness... [this Element] will focus on a substantial number of major mental illnesses, including depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, substance

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use disorders, borderline personality disorder, conduct disorder, antisocial personality disorder, autism spectrum disorder, and eating disorders” [Carlin 2022: 1]. The key point threads throughout the text and incrementally discloses with the support of the sources and their main thoughts that the Author relies on.

It is vitally important that Nathan Carlin points out the distinguishing feature of his survey and provides clarity to the materials he has been using for comparison and analysis, explaining the difference and importance of these. “A distinguishing feature of this Element is that it will pair material from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) with classic or contemporary pathographies of mental illness... If scientific evidence points to key trends (i.e., findings) with regard to a particular mental illness, which are necessary for diagnosis, pathographies lift up common themes (i.e., insights), which can be useful for treatment and policy. It is worth pointing out that pathographies, both because they are a snapshot in time and also because they tend to be written by patients, can sometimes present misleading, outdated, or incorrect clinical information. This is another reason why it is important to pair pathographies with the most recent version of the DSM” [ibid: 1]. Thus, a reader becomes aware of the peculiarities of what he or she is going to read.

The author begins the consideration of the concept of “pathography” with the most classic work in this genre; Hawkins’ work *Reconstructing Illness* [Hawkins 1993]. He gradually outlines her views and reflections of other representatives of classical pathographers on her thoughts, as well as on the definition of pathography, its essence, and forms. It is also noticeable that he conducted a qualitative study not only of the works described but also of the concepts, terms, and debates primarily related to the genre of mentioned materials. Section 2.2 *Narrative ethics* can serve as a rather striking example. Revealing the definition of the title of the section, Nathan Carlin also explains the specifics of the concept in a simplified manner: “Therefore, what makes narrative ethics different from, say, usual applications of principlist bioethics is that narrative ethics pays much more attention to issues such as context and emotions” [Carlin 2022: 5]. In addition to the above, in the very same section he prescribes answers to some of the most significant questions in the Element, such as why and for whom pathographies matter, what benefits they provide, and why they should be considered at all: “...providing interesting reading”, “Why do pathographies matter?”. Proposed reasons can be associated with different groups (authors, general readers, health care professionals etc.).

Due to historical conditions, racial and gender bias, most of the classic pathographies are written by White people, which created a restriction on the choice of works for the survey in *Pathographies of Mental Illness*. It is commendable that the writer has paid attention to this and tried to somehow compensate it by adding to the Element more contemporary works with an emphasis on those by people of colour: “For some mental illnesses, there are none [pathographies]. To somewhat mitigate this bias, an appendix is offered of more recent pathographies with an emphasis on persons of colour” [ibid: 2]. Author attempts to avoid sexism as well. He also cites some remarks by well-known pathographers on this subject, reflecting on its role in the perception of and impact on mental illness. “In the pathographies included in this Element, Kaysen forcefully raised this subject by addressing issues of sexism head-on... Similarly, Hornbacher addressed issues of sexism and misogyny in Western culture in a way that recalls Foucault’s notion of subjectification (how persons make themselves into who they are). Although people may believe their choices to be free, they may, in fact, be influenced by outside oppressive forces”. [Cole, Carson, Carlin 2015: 264–266].

A great deal of respect is shown towards the writers of the analysed pathographies with accent on their personal value and contribution to the worlds of medicine and literature. For instance, while writing about William Styron and his pathography *Darkness Visible*, the Author of the Element mentions Styron is “one of the most influential American fiction writers of the twentieth century”, and later adds that “what Styron gives us, as a professional writer, is the gift of a description of an inner experience that is almost not understandable by outsiders” [Carlin 2022: 8].

One more aspect worthy of a favourable comment is the fact that Author doesn’t forget to focus on common wrong beliefs, misunderstandings, and myths about the described topics. He corrects them and bothers to give eloquent and clear explanations, as in the following: “Sometimes the words “borderline” and “bipolar” are confused, as there is a tendency to incorrectly associate borderline with being manic, which is often a symptom of bipolar disorder. Also, borderline is a personality disorder, while bipolar is a mood disorder” [ibid: 9]. The parts with clinical information about the diseases covered in the Element are presented in the most accessible and understandable wording with the most necessary details without the use of excessive

scientific formulations. This will be of great comfort to readers who will be familiarizing themselves with this kind of scientific work for the first time, or who may have had a vague or distorted understanding of mental illness.

Moving on to the final evaluation, *Pathographies of Mental Illness* considers certain issues in the field of science and psychology in particular, looking into the retrospective of classical pathographies and so providing a part of the basis for further research in this area. This basis is created through pairing pathographies with the most recent version of the DSM, because “Like pathographies, all versions of the DSM are snapshots in time, reflecting the scientific thinking of a particular moment, also embedding assumptions about race, gender, and other cultural considerations” [ibid: 1]. It is tangible that this Element is highly relevant for modern psychology.

The obtained results, especially regarding the key personal themes lifted up in *Pathographies of Mental Illness*, are undoubtedly worthy of more detailed consideration and possible to apply in further studies in the field. To be more specific, the Author has identified and briefly described the main features of each of the themes, thus collecting the most fundamental issues and aspects of pathographies in a small collection that can be very useful both for those who are just beginning to familiarize themselves with the concept of pathography and for those who want to write one of their own.

As far as the structure of the Element is concerned, *Pathographies of Mental Illness* has a clear plan, is well-structured, and contains sections with a concise unbiased analysis of the chosen topics. At the end, there is a conclusion and a list of all the necessary references. The wording is exemplary in its correctness; references, quotations, notes, and the bibliography are written very competently and in full accordance with the rules. It is worth mentioning that the use of terminology is proper and appropriate, and so is the Appendix; works included there are of great interest and fully cover the topics described in the Element. Furthermore, the presentation of information is impressively logical, as the Author slowly glides from one point to another while keeping readers attention and interest. Turning to the linguistic and literary techniques used by the researcher, one good technique stands out in particular. Rhetorical thought-provoking questions like “Was he ashamed? Was he trying to nurture agency among persons suffering from depression? What are the ethical and moral

responsibilities of representation?”, naturally are not answered further in the text. Their role should not be underestimated; as they help readers dive deeper into their own analysis and understanding of given information. Nathan Carlin’s cautious and somehow journalistic curiosity is transmitted through his well-chosen questions without clouding readers’ perception and assessment of the described situations with his own vision. Developing the topic just mentioned, various thoughts and quotes are brought to the reader’s acquaintance in a professional manner. The Author displays information, explains it, but doesn’t add his own emotional evaluation and subjective thoughts. Nathan Carlin highlights that on his own in concluding Section 12: “The pathographies in this Element have been presented almost without comment, not on the basis of their veracity, but because of the insights they provide” [ibid: 44]. If there are any adjectives of emotions, they are inserted rather carefully and aptly when it comes to conclusion in pathographical parts of the Element. Given pathographies and statements of other people are simultaneously looked at from positive, negative, and neutral sides. It is important for the readers to make up their minds on their own. At the end of the work, there is a gentle observation about the importance of social connections, good human support, love, and empathy for the people around us, especially those who lack understanding and acceptance. “Perhaps the most important point to underscore is that hope is made possible and nurtured by means of social connections... An objective here is that, by reading these pathographies, persons with mental illness will be better understood and that we all might grow in empathetic awareness and relational connection” [ibid: 44]. The Author reminds readers that being a compassionate human being is an effective solution to many interpersonal, social, and ethical problems. In addition to the knowledge of mental illnesses from the perspective of those who suffer from them, he leaves us a foundation for further reflection on the nature of the human psyche, relationships, and self-cognition.

*Pathographies of Mental Illness* will also serve as an excellent guide for Ukrainian psychology and psychiatry specialists dealing with participants of the russian-Ukrainian war, their relatives and friends, as well as civilians. A large number of people suffer greatly from psychological problems that are direct consequences of the war and losses due to the russian aggression. A better understanding of the mental

illnesses described in *the Element* can help Ukrainian psychologists, psychotherapists, and psychiatrists explain their essence and all the peculiarities of living with them not only to affected combatants but also to their families, social environment, and the population of the country in general. This, in turn, will facilitate faster integration and adaptation of the military into normal civilian life.

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