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Book Review: Roberto Beneduce, *Etnopsichiatria. Sofferenza mentale e alterità fra Storia, dominio e cultura*. Roma: Carocci, 2007. 399 pp. 24.50 (pb), ISBN 9788843035038

Vincenzo Spigonardo
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which became dominant globally in the 1960s and 1970s. However, the field of psychiatry has also been the object of other debates concerning the discourses on independence, development, and the revaluation of traditional knowledge. At the same time, the discipline of ethnopsychiatry has been taking shape in France, in opposition to colonial psychiatry. Keller reviews the work of leading figures in ethnopsychiatry – especially Georges Devereux and Tobie Nathan. His discussion is brief and partial, but useful in highlighting how the debate around the “Other’s” mental suffering relates to the broader problem of citizenship. Finally, starting with the description of a recent meeting in Paris, Keller discusses how the memories of the violence perpetrated during the colonial period and the Algerian struggle for independence are currently managed by the actors on both sides of the Mediterranean.

In sum, the book casts light on a history scarcely known until now. As such, it succeeds in contextualizing Fanon, an icon of post-colonial studies. At the same time, however, it also accounts for a path of complexity. Keller’s work confirms that colonial psychiatry remains an important topic of analysis, necessary not only for identifying the devices of colonial power, but also for understanding the roots of the discourses constructed around the “Other,” that are reiterated in contemporary ethnopsychiatry.

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Roberto Beneduce, *Etnopsichiatria. Sofferenza mentale e alterità fra Storia, dominio e cultura*. Roma: Carocci, 2007. 399 pp. €24.50 (pb), ISBN 9788843035038.

Reviewed by: Vincenzo Spigonardo, *University of Bologna, Italy*

Roberto Beneduce, psychiatrist and professor of anthropology at the University of Turin, provides a broad literature review of the theoretical background, epistemological arguments, and historical-political context of ethnopsychiatry. The analysis follows three methodological and conceptual axes. The first axis provides an historical perspective on the political and social frames of early debates about the relationship between culture and mental health. Here, Beneduce reviews the pioneering work of Kraepelin, Gilles de la Tourette, and other leading psychiatrists of the early

1900's. He then analyzes in detail the thought of Franz Fanon, both in his struggle against colonial domination, and his anticipation of the many tangles that concern modern ethnopsychiatry. Beneduce clearly portrays the dynamics that link colonial policies and psychiatric practices. He also explores the role of colonial psychiatry in subduing colonized populations, above all through the processes of culturalization and medicalization of political reactions against colonial domination.

In the second axis, attention is focused on the epistemological basis of contemporary ethnopsychiatry as a discipline. Here the outstanding contribution of Georges Devereux was crucial in defining the main theoretical directions and methodological specificity of ethnopsychiatry. Beneduce reviews the work of the first centers of African ethnopsychiatry led during the early 1960s by Henri Collomb in Senegal and Thomas A. Lambo in Nigeria. The work of these clinical research centers enhanced and enriched the international debate on the issues of traditional healing, symbolic efficacy and the construction of African etiological categories, as well as the broader understanding of culture-bound syndromes in other societies.

This second part also includes an original chapter, entitled "*Avatar dell'etnopsichiatria in Italia*," in which Beneduce analyzes the main theoretical contributions of three Italian authors: Ernesto de Martino, Alfonso Maria di Nola, and Michele Risso. These authors developed anthropological, phenomenological, and historiographical perspectives that provided deeper understanding of mental illness, its treatment, and social integration. For these authors, the folkloric and religious traditions widespread in southern and central Italy were more than simply exotic phenomena; they constituted authentic representations of the world, a foundation of psychological and social economies, and therefore deserve both historical and cultural recognition. In fact, in post-World War II Italy, the cultural otherness that challenged the dominant scientific and rationalistic order was represented mainly by the working class moving from central and southern Italy to northern Italy, Switzerland, and Germany.

In the third axis, Beneduce introduces topics connected to clinical applications of ethnopsychiatry. The notion of *nostalgia* as the core of the migratory experience (to which a large literature review is devoted) opens this section and introduces the even more complex theme of the construction of cultural identity of the immigrant. Beneduce proposes the concept of ambivalence as a key to understanding contradictory aspects of the suffering of immigrants, as well as why migration health policies are polarized between the necessity for integration and the defense of national identity. In this third section, Beneduce, who is the founder and director of the Franz Fanon Center in Turin (which has been treating psychological disorders in the immigrant population since 1996), uses his clinical expertise to analyze cases in which the therapeutic approach reveals the most distinctive aspects of ethnopsychiatry. Among these is the necessity to recognize traditional etiological categories as what Marie-Rose Moro has called "therapeutic levers to gain access to more 'universal' psychic content" (quoted in Fassin & Rechtman, 1998). A cultural perspective can emancipate clinical practice from stereotypes, but it can also create new forms of marginalization. Beneduce also stresses the problem of

how to mediate and translate meanings and symbols of suffering in the transcultural context without mistaking or losing fundamental details, or compromising the therapeutic alliance. He also addresses how to build up the role of cultural broker and to structure the therapeutic setting in relation to the quality and quantity of actors participating in it.

Beneduce concludes this clinical section of the book with a paragraph devoted to the treatment of victims of torture. Here, he underlines how violence is a dramatic outcome of political, economic, and cultural processes, and how psychiatric illness itself can become a resource for social recognition. Beneduce reviews the best known clinical and therapeutic techniques that have had an impact on the psychosocial rehabilitation of torture victims, but notes that such approaches do not constitute the only sources of care. In particular, he encourages us to reflect on how the Pentecostal Church and other charismatic communities have become an alternative model of psychological support and therapeutic intervention.

In conclusion, I would like to recommend this book for both its academic and narrative value. Beneduce's work addresses the central topics of ethnopsychiatry with competence and originality. It is rich with critical reflections and bibliographical notes, distinguishing itself in the Italian literature for its integrity and engagement with both theoretical and practical concerns.

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Grant H. Brenner, Daniel H. Bush, & Joshua Moses (Eds.), *Creating Spiritual and Psychological Resilience: Integrating Care in Disaster Relief Work*. New York: Routledge, 2010. 264 pp. US\$39.00 (pb), ISBN 9780789034557.

Reviewed by: Hanna Kienzler, *McGill University, Canada*

Interpersonal, inter-organizational, and interdisciplinary collaboration in disaster care are fundamental to strengthening the expertise, approaches, and tools of disaster relief work. This book is a collaborative effort by three co-editors from diverse disciplinary backgrounds (chaplaincy, psychiatry, and anthropology) with the purpose of sharing their professional experiences and advancing collaboration between spiritual and mental health care providers. Most of the contributing authors have on-the-ground experience in aid relief during a wide range of disasters including the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the tsunami in South Asia, Hurricane Katrina in the southern United States, and airplane crashes in different parts of the world.