

**“TOWARD AN APPLIED NEUROANTHROPOLOGY OF PSYCHOSIS: THE
INTERPLAY OF CULTURE, BRAINS, AND EXPERIENCE” - Neely Anne**

Laurenzo Myers

Reviewed by - Maham Zulfiqar

"Psychotic disorders emerge from the interplay between culture, brains, and experience. Understanding psychotic... requires a rich understanding of all three, which may best be captured by the transdisciplinary methods and theory of an applied neuroanthropology."

"Western people experiencing psychotic symptoms often long to make sense of their experiences in a socially acceptable way, but lack opportunities to do so in Western countries."

Neely Anne Laurenzo Myers' discussion of cultural and subjectively perceived etiologies of psychotic diseases serves as socio-cultural anthropology's attempt at a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of the onset of psychosis. It is anthropology reaching out to neuroscience, with the understanding that a merging of the two perspectives, a transdisciplinary approach to psychosis, may aid in more sensitive and effective treatments, possibly even prevention.

Myers cites the difficulties that individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia in the west face. This is in contrast to non-western cases, where individuals have often linked their experiences of psychosis to religious and spiritual beliefs. The strongly established biomedical etiology favoured in the west may result in those who suffered from psychosis in the past to feel alienated. She reasons, based on ethnographic analyses, that the individual's experience of psychosis was very real from their perspective. Although biomedical etiology may provide explanations and medications, Myers believes that diagnosis and treatments negatively impacts patients' sense of agency and beliefs.

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Myers also discusses environmental factors (stressors) that are often cited as playing a role in those who may have a genetic predisposition, going on to develop a psychotic disorder. She urges neuroscientists and anthropologists to view psychotic disorders through an neuroanthropological lens. She believes that monitoring structural and neurochemical changes in the brain, cognitive performance, and environmental factors of those with genetic susceptibilities, can be successful in potentially preventing or limiting the impacts of the condition.

Myers' research and arguments aim to improve the lives of those living with both the stigma and the experience of schizophrenia. Her reasoning is strong and provides great motivation for both neuroscience, anthropology and other disciplines to join forces. However, the success of her suggestions is heavily dependent on other scientists' conviction of its merits, as well as possible governmental interventions and resources to bring patient-centered programs to fruition.

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