

Bottling the Darkness of Inner Life: Considering the Origins of Model Psychosis

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Abstract : The pharmacological arm of mental health treatment is in a state of crisis. The promises of the Prozac century have fallen short; the number of different therapeutically significant medications that successfully complete development shrinks with every passing year, and the demand for better treatments only grows. Answering these hardships is a renewed optimism concerning the efficacy of controlled psychedelic therapy, a renaissance that has seen the return of a familiar concept: intoxication as a model psychosis. First appearing in the mid-19th century and featuring in an array of 20th century efforts in psychedelic research, model psychosis has, once more, come to the foreground of psychedelic research. And yet, little has been made of where this peculiar, perhaps even intoxicatingly mad, the idea originates. This paper seeks to uncover the conceptual foundations underlying the early emergence of model psychosis. This narrative will explore the conceptual foundations behind their independent development of the concept of model psychosis, considering their similarities and differences. In the course of this examination, it becomes apparent that the definition of endogenous psychosis, which formed in the mid-19th century, is the direct product of emerging understandings of exogenous psychosis, or model psychosis. Ultimately, the goal is not merely to understand how and why model psychosis became thinkable but to examine how seemingly secondary concept changes can engender new ways of being a psychiatric subject.

Keywords : history of psychiatry, model psychosis, history of medicine, history of science

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