



## **The Culture-Bound Syndromes: Folk Illnesses of Psychiatric and Anthropological Interest (Culture, Illness and Healing)**

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In the last few years there has been a great revival of interest in culture-bound psychiatric syndromes. A spate of new papers has been published on well known and less familiar syndromes, and there have been a number of attempts to put some order into the field of inquiry. In a review of the literature on culture-bound syndromes up to 1969 Yap made certain suggestions for organizing thinking about them which for the most part have not received general acceptance (see Carr, this volume, p. 199). Through the seventies new descriptive and conceptual work was scarce, but in the last few years books and papers discussing the field were authored or edited by Tseng and McDermott (1981), Al-Issa (1982), Friedman and Faguet (1982) and Murphy (1982). In 1983 Favazza summarized his understanding of the state of current thinking for the fourth edition of the Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry, and a symposium on culture-bound syndromes was organized by Kenny for the Eighth International Congress of Anthropology and Ethnology. The strongest impression to emerge from all this recent work is that there is no substantive consensus, and that the very concept, "culture-bound syndrome" could well use some serious reconsideration. As the role of culture-specific beliefs and practices in all affliction has come to be increasingly recognized it has become less and less clear what sets the culture-bound syndromes apart.

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