



Origins of Psychopathology: The Phylogenetic and Cultural Basis of Mental Illness

Jr. Horacio Fabrega

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What are the origins of human psychopathology? Is mental illness a relatively recent phenomenon, or has it been with us throughout evolution?

In *Origins of Psychopathology*, Horacio Fábrega Jr. employs principles of evolutionary biology to better understand the significance of mental illness. He explores whether what psychiatry has categorized as mental disorders could have existed during earlier phases of human evolution. Fábrega approaches the prominent features of mental disorders as adaptive responses to the environment and life's circumstances, which in turn can only be understood in the context of our evolutionary past. Taking his cue from theoretical issues raised by research into primate behavior and early hominid evolution, he poses the question: What, if any, aspects of mental illness are rooted in our evolution? Does mental illness occur in primates and other animals, and if so, what does this tell us about mental illness in human evolution? How has mental illness played an adaptive role? How has the development of language and higher cognitive functions affected characteristics of psychopathology? Fábrega synthesizes insights from both the clinical and the evolutionary points of view. This facet of psychopathology, which involves its origins and manifestations viewed across the expanse of human evolution, has, until now, been largely neglected in psychiatric education, theory, and practice.

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