Abstract

The concept of psychosis as known today comes from the late nineteenth century, and was developed from ancient notions, such as insanity, alienation and dementia. Four dichotomies can be registered in the evolution of the concept: Psychosis vs. Neurosis, Unitary vs. Multiple, Functional vs. Organic, and Endogenous vs Exogenous. The purpose of this research is to rethink the issue of unitary psychosis from a new scientific and epistemological reading. Toward this objective, the terms of nosotaxis, nosography and nosology are discussed, as well as the role of major classification systems of contemporary psychiatry. It also imposes a historical review of the concept from Aretaeus of Cappadocia to the present. Through a rigorous hermeneutic exercise, we discuss the problem of the positivist Kraepelinian conception of psychoses and its epistemological resolution through complex thinking theory, and chaos theory, with empirical reference to hallucinations and delusion as well as the biological basis of schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, but emphasizing their common components. Essential to perform this exercise are theoretical developments from Bartolome Llopis and Henri Ey, enriched by the latest findings of neuroscience. It seems clear that mental illness is a loss of complexity, leaving little of the fresh and unexpected chaotic health behavior. While asserting the existence of a unitary psychosis is controversial with current available data, it is equally true that the assertion of a schizophrenia/bipolar disorder dichotomy is also difficult to sustain. However, the axial syndrome common to all psychoses, Bartolomé Llopis’s brainchild, remains a fertile idea, as well as the concept of Henri Ey, to understand mental illness as a condition of loss of freedom.

Keywords

Unitary psicosis, hallucination, delusion, anankastic phenomena, nosology.