



Where have You hidden Yourself, And abandoned me in my groaning, O my Beloved?

Editorial

Undoubtedly, the perceptive reader of this issue of SALUD MENTAL – which is celebrating its 36th anniversary of uninterrupted publication – had recognized in the title of this Editorial the beginning of St. John of the Cross' *Cántico espiritual* (Spiritual Canticle) in its English version:

*Where have You hidden Yourself,
And abandoned me in my groaning?
O my Beloved?*

a masterpiece of Spanish mystical poetry. You might think, slightly surprised – as many people have put forward for years – that it has finally been decided that our bilingual publication will be published only in English, just as the complete and unabridged electronic version, which can be found at www.inprf-cd.org.mx/revista_sm by clicking "English version". Or you might remember Robert Frost's shrewd phrase: "Poetry is what gets lost in translation". However, when reading the Table of Contents of this issue 5, our reader will recognize the multidisciplinary and international nature that is the brand of the Institute's official body. Likewise, our reader will appreciate the interest in preserving the cosmopolitan character of the medical discipline to which development is devoted, and will recall a discussion that is ongoing in many parts of the world, about mono and multilingualism in Psychiatry. This discussion goes parallel to the one concerning the hegemonic management of Diagnostic and Statistical Manuals.

Mysticism and Psychiatry converge in Professor Alonso-Fernández's essay on his recent and erudite psychohistorical work devoted to the nun Saint Teresa of Jesus, who also ties together – for the sake of the Spanish language – Literature and Psychiatry, just as with her protégé and collaborator, San Juan de la Cruz (both considered by the Saint herself, in view of the poet's scanty stature, as "a monk and a half"). Therefore, it is no less paradoxical and disconcerting (or rather worrying for several colleagues) that an International Symposium on "Psychiatry & Religious Experience" had been organized in 2010, right in the City of Ávila, the cradle of Saint Teresa, with the official language being English, just as "if science only could be expressed in the English lan-

guage [...] and that everything that has real scientific value should be necessarily expressed in English".¹

That said, with having "Religious Experience" be one of the elements of the double theme of such symposium, it is valid to question the importance that the English language has played within the Western mystical tradition. In line with these ideas one should consider the *Letter to Editor* sent in 2012 by Professor Nestor de la Portilla, from the University of Carabobo, Venezuela, to the *British Journal of Psychiatry*. The letter questioned that when English is imposed as the only official language in international congresses, 90% of attendees have to use the language of 10% of attendees in the discussions.² The *Letter to a Foreign Psychiatrist* that Seyyed Nassir Ghaemi published last April 11 in *Psychiatric Times* is not less disconcerting and worrying, in which he proclaims "All psychiatry, anywhere in the world, is American psychiatry". After recalling his unsuccessful experiences in a particular European clinic more than twenty years ago, he concludes that one of the pros of "American" psychiatry over European psychiatry is the introduction of "effective treatments" such as lithium.³ Maybe a charitable historian of psychiatry can explain to the Spanish-American colleague that it was indeed in Europe where modern psychopharmacology arose. As for lithium, for example, last year Professor Jean Garrabé published in SALUD MENTAL a very comprehensive overview of Johan Schioldann's book "History of the Introduction of Lithium into Medicine and Psychiatry. Birth of Modern Psychopharmacology 1949"⁴, which shows the process of its (lithium's) discovery and distribution.

Psychiatry's international, cosmopolitan and multilingual nature is illustrated with the rest of the articles included in this issue of SALUD MENTAL. Besides Francisco Alonso-Fernández's psychohistorical text, another two articles by Spanish authors are included: one by Elena Carratalá et al., from Alicante and another by Neus Barrantes-Vidal, from Barcelona; two South Americans: research by Ismael Mena, Annaliese Dörr et al., from Santiago de Chile and an essay by María Lucrecia Rovaletti, from Buenos Aires; and two North American collaborations (Sheinbaum, Berry and Leiner). Among the articles written in Mexico, there is an attitude

Translation of the original version published in spanish in:
Salud Mental 2013, Vol. 36 Issue No. 5.

that avoids endogamy and centralism, since only one article is from INPRFM and the rest are from other national institutions in Mexico City and other northern states of Mexico.

If while celebrating thirty-six years SALUD MENTAL is still produced as a Spanish-English publication, then it should bear mentioning that throughout its life it has kept a policy of including authors and of reviewing representative bibliographical texts from a multilingual and multicultural psychiatric world. Mother tongues of Psychiatry have certainly passed their preeminence to the *lingua franca* of today's Empire, but specialists, in order to cover the wide field they are entrusted with, should always recall that such tongues have a great amount of knowledge that may never be translated into English, thus they should bear in mind Charles V's shrewd phrase: "I'm as many men as languages I speak".

Héctor Pérez-Rincón
San Lorenzo-Huipulco, September 2013.

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