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The Puerto Rican Syndrome (Hardback)

By Patricia Gherovici

Other Press LLC, United States, 2003. Hardback. Book Condition: New. New.. 228 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****. During the 1950s, US Army medical officers noted a new and puzzling syndrome that contemporary psychiatry could not explain nor cure. These doctors reported that Puerto Rican soldiers under stress behaved in a very peculiar and dramatic manner, exhibiting a theatrical form of pseudo-epilepsy. Startled physicians observed frightened and disoriented patients foaming at the mouth, screaming, biting, kicking, shaking in seizures and fainting. The phenomenon seemed to correspond to a serious neurological disease yet, as with some forms of hysteria, physical examination failed to identify any sign of an organic origin. This unusual set of symptoms, entered into medical records as a group of striking psychopathological reaction patterns, precipitated by minor stress, was designated Puerto Rican Syndrome. In the contemporary world, its social and cultural implications for the growing Hispanic population in the US and, therefore, for the US as a whole. As a mental illness that is, allegedly, uniquely Puerto Rican, this syndrome links nationality and culture to a psychiatric disease whose reappearance recalls the spectacular hysteria that led to the discovery of...



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