

A CASE OF SCHIZOPHRENIA

Franz Kaltenbeck

In the case with a psychotic we try first of all to fight against his unbearable anguish and to avoid him proceeding to a dangerous act.

Beyond this urgency analytical treatment has a more important aim: we intend to protect the subject from the *jouissance* of the Other. He is not separated from this *jouissance*, so he is threatened by it.

How can we manage this protection? In helping him to find a way out of the closed system in which he is trapped. What he says sometimes gives us useful hints to find this way. But at the same time as he breaks through to the outer world he also constructs a barrier against the intrusive *jouissance*.

It would be wrong to think that he can find this way by his own means. Even great psychotic creators have met people who encouraged their work. When psychotics find real solutions to their problems these solutions have generally more than a pure therapeutic interest.

Psychosis is a clinical structure with many varying pictures. Its symptoms change in the course of time. Eugen Bleuler gave another nosography than Emil Kraepelin. And in 1976, in the epilogue of one of his most famous clinical presentations, Jacques Lacan distinguished between Freudian and Lacanian psychosis. The symptom changes: that does not mean that the symptom implies progress. As I will show, you may have very archaic components in a symptom which are nevertheless mixed up with the most recent questions of science.

My patient is a computer engineer who was working in a big factory of the North when he consulted me for the first time. He suffered from heavy insomnia. His mind masturbated itself, he explained.

Two technicians working under his orders occupied his mind. One of them was inaccessible but not hostile, the other was connected to a bad man. My analysand feared that he could attack this bad guy. Actually he had done something like that many years ago when he was still in high school. A girl surrounded by a bunch of boys threatened him in a very castrating way. She said to him when they were in the canteen: 'We are going to nick your piece'. And his fist landed in the girl's face. He simply could not help it. But then the boys knocked him down.

During our first sessions he spoke very loudly, sometimes like a machine-gun, but also very slowly, weighing each word. He repeated certain words like an echo. And when he could not find a word he cried: 'Come on, come on!' as if he was beseeching the Other of the language-code to give him the refused word. On certain occasions he employed the style of mathematicians: 'here we shall say that...' even if he was expressing a trivial fact of everyday life. Eugen Bleuler has described the (?) of schizophrenic patients who speak of very ordinary things as if they were objects of pure fiction.

He told me very soon about the void, which threatened him. He could neither contact

the technician who intrigued him nor could he 'touch the thing': Every experimental approach on the computer was forbidden to him unless he had studied beforehand the complete resulting process.

Behind these harassing figures of the imaginary Other appeared the schizophrenic's mother. At first she incarnated the demands of a totalitarian ideal.

The patient gave much proof of the foreclosure of the Name-of-the-Father. His mother called his father a 'dirty man'. There was no place for this man in her desire: when she married him she renounced a mythical lover and gave up her ambitions to become a painter. She spoke to her son of the sexual demands of his father and said that she could not bear them.

The imaginary Other has an important role in the psychotic structure as you can see on Lacan's schemas R and I. The other is imaginary but it is in the 'field of reality' which anticipates what he later called the object *a* and the real. The other (*a*) is on the line S (subject) - M (primordial object). So the other is narrowly related to the mother-object.

It has its place 'in the relations of erotic expression',¹ between the subject (S) and the mother (M).

I could observe that the little others harassed my patient much more when he was far from his mother. Some of them became very aggressive. He went on to speak to his mother as if she were present, telling her in an imaginary dialogue what had happened to him. He gave her his news even if he in fact spoke to her on the phone every evening.

The sex of the other is without doubt inconsistent. But it has a terrible influence on the schizophrenic. On the one hand the little others dominate the female object. On the other hand they determine and inhibit 'the force of his utterance'.

In every group he entered he distinguishes a man who seems to be very successful with girls. This man becomes his persecutor. If such a man speaks to another man, my patient thinks that they are speaking about girls or sometimes about him. Their conversation makes a lot of noise in his head.

Suppose there was a girl in the same room. In this case he could not say anything to her because of the other man, his persecutor. This 'Don Juan' would receive the gallant approach of our subject as a declaration of war. And nothing would prevent my patient from hitting his persecutor.

He fears also that the young men around him could try to rape the girl in his presence so that he has to defend her.

Sometimes the aggressor is feminine. A girl may smoke in the bus. As he has a very strict idea about the law he feels obliged to stop her but he dares not do so.

The other has a dramatic impact on his speech acts: Every injunction blocks him. He cannot demand anything as the other can say 'no'. The act of naming and every attribution of responsibility paralyzes him. Conversations frighten him: they are self-producing machines. When you get in you cannot get out. Your own words and talks are insufficient, too short. He has the maxim: 'Never complain!' His only judge is his

mother. His words have no value, no effect. 'What results from this? Violence!'

The Oxford philosopher J.G. Austin distinguishes 'performative utterances' from utterances which report facts.

Philosophers before Austin were mainly interested in these (declarative)³ utterances because they thought that sentences about facts are always either true or false.

Performative utterances are sentences like 'I apologise', 'I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth' or 'I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow'. Austin explains: 'In saying what I do, I actually perform the action'.² If somebody is the chief of a big company and he says to his secretary 'Please shut the door!' his order is very near to a performative.

These utterances express the speaker's intention to influence the other.³ Austin was a realistic thinker and so he understood very quickly that performatives can fail. They can be 'unsatisfactory'. He calls these 'the infelicities'. Such utterances are 'unhappy' if certain rules are broken. For example, you should not say to your horse 'I appoint you Consul' or to your dog 'I appoint you director of the Chase Manhattan Bank'. If you seriously intended to appoint your horse or your dog you would 'misfire', as Austin calls it. He says that we should not only be interested in truth and signification but also in the 'force' of utterances. And finally he found out that the boundaries between performatives and declaratives are not so tight as it appeared to him at the beginning of his research.

I think that the Austinian approach to language is very important for the analysis of schizophrenia. Of course there is a lot of work on the level of the words and of signifiers in cases of schizophrenia. For example, my patient has decided to speak with me in German to get out of his mother tongue, which is French. He says that he wants to create a 'neutral space'. Regarding this he proceeds in a similar way as Louis Wolfson. But much of his work in analysis concerns his difficulties in speaking to the other.

This difficulty is due to the problematic position of the schizophrenic with regard to each speech-act. In 1960 Lacan taught that the psychotic subject contents himself with the 'preliminary Other', the Other of the code of signifier which is complete. In his seminar on Joyce (1975-1976) he insists on the testimony of Joyce's *Ulysses*: 'All his work is a long testimony'.⁴ The testimony that Joyce rooted in his father even if he renounced him. This character of testimony is also very perceptible in the analysis of my patient. Perhaps testimony is the privileged form of the schizophrenic utterance.

Our analysand testified for example that he only dares to speak to the other when he has everything under control.

This strictness is a response to his mother's demand. In neurosis the Ego-Ideal is connected with the father PI in schema R. But in the psychotic structure there is no signifier of the father. There is a hole. And this hole is covered by the mother's totalitarian demand. 'You will not go out as long as you have not learned all your lessons!' This is rather a trivial sentence that many mothers say to their son. But it had a special signification for our patient. To go out after swotting signified for him to 'go through a door'. But what would he find behind that door? To 'go out' had for him yet another signification. He established an equivalence between 'to go out' and 'to be born'.

Utterance is for our patient very close to this signification. He speaks of utterance in terms of 'emission', 'expulsion'. We are really not very far from the Freudian *Ausstossung* (expulsion). In his article *Drives and their vicissitudes* (1915) Freud uses the verb to expel as the opposite of the introjection of Ferenczi.⁵ And when we read this text with *On Negation* (1925) where he says 'to exclude' instead of 'to expel', we can say that expulsion constitutes the Freudian reality. Expulsion or exclusion is preceded by the first affirmation (introjection), and this is the act of judgement by which the subject accepts this signifier. The psychotic does not accept it.

For our patient, who has not read Freud, speaking supposes a process of expulsion, an emission. An utterance is for him a materialistic and a logical process: 'What counts are the conditions of the emission'. An emission has a satisfactory condition when he knows everything about the subject to be spoken about.

His difficulties with speech-acts have their root in a deep perturbation of his drive and this perturbation is due to his not being separated from his mother. He is an insomniac like her. Sleeping in the next room to hers means that every noise, every silence, disturbs his sleep.

He refers his stuttering to masturbation but affirms that his mother induced him to this *jouissance* when she commanded: 'You will stay in the toilets until you are completely emptied!' He compares his depreciated speech to minced meat.

The obligation to swot isolated him from others. His mother understands his rivalry with his colleagues: she is like him.

When the Other is not different from you the notion of equivalence loses its value. At the moments where he goes away from her he himself feels the pains she feels in her stomach!

Their symbiosis does not prevent her from commanding her son. Here are the four commandments of his childhood: 1) 'Speak clearly!' 2) 'Keep your shoulders back!' 3) 'Empty yourself on the toilet' 4) 'Comb your hair!' The command 'speak clearly' for him means 'to spit'. His mother spits when she speaks of his father.

He represents the continuum between himself and his mother as a 'pipe', a pipe-line. On the one end is his mother on the other is his Ego. And he calls this device 'one-pipe'. 'One' because his mother always uses the (French) impersonal pronoun 'one' (*on*). She never says 'I' and 'you'.

His words are charged like weapons when he faces the other, his sentences are registered letters. A sentence is for him like a contract. It has consequences. As he denies any value to his words he can not sleep when he really has to say something to somebody.

All the structures of the law which seem to give us some security terrify him. There is nothing more uncanny as to have somebody under your orders. He can not easily bear to be in the subject/object relation nor to have the simplest social link. Once he had to improvise a little scene: A man meets two unknown women in a park. He interpreted this stage-direction very specially. The two women were whores and he told them that he would not be their client. You can imagine the effect he made on the stage of this amateur-theatre. So the speech as an instrument for the social

contract is dangerous for him. Everything that is done to organise the social Other outside the mother-son dyad seems hostile to him.

He tried to organise the *jouissance* of the Other with a discreet delusion. A delusion of being a martyr of the Church and even a redeemer.

At first he had the frightening idea that his mother could throw him and hand him over to brutal young people who would hit him.

His very catholic mother knows a priest. This priest would send him as a missionary to a wild tribe. But when he arrived there the savages would stone him. As his mother has very good relations in the Church she could avoid this violent fate for him. I think we can interpret this delusion with the help of the Schreberian *liegenlassen*. Being left in the lurch.

At a given moment he combined this delusion with his notion of the death of the subject. He had recently heard a radio-programme about the crucifixion of Christ. All the details of the torture were clinically described. He noted: 'At the moment of his crucifixion Jesus was 30 years old and the only woman he had was his mother...is this not the announcement of my death (I am 30 years old)?'

Like Wittgenstein he asks: 'What are the limits of my understanding?' But in contrast to the Cambridge philosopher he thinks that his mother knows if he understands a mathematical text even if he admits that she does not have the means to understand the text. After all, she knows her son!

At this point we have to ask the question of prognosis. Is there a way out of the closed system where his mother keeps the keys of signification and in which she decides if he does or does not understand a problem?

Remark that he managed to leave his parent's home as he now works near Paris. Life with his mother had become a real disaster. He told me in a letter during last summer: 'Even dead I would be able to suffer from insomnia'. He compared his mother with a dealer who provided him with drugs: 'If I don't take her affection I am thrown into that void which so cruelly terrorises the addict'. So it seems dangerous to ask him to cut his links with his mother.

In his cure he has redrawn the circle in which he is imprisoned. The symbolic is closed by the signification and by the arbitration of his mother. This circle separates him from the outer world.

After all, this circle is not as naive as it seems to be. In his *Introduction to the work of Marcel Mauss*, C. Lévi-Strauss develops the following argument: As language emerged all at once, man is hindered by a totality of signifiers. This totality is in excess with regard of what man can signify. The totality of the signifiers does not imply knowledge. We don't know the universe because we know a language. So only science could lead us to identification between the signifier and the signified. As humanity does not yet possess the scientific knowledge which would establish this identification people introduce floating signs, for example the zero-symbol, which are mediators between the two sets (of the signifier and the signified).⁶ Lacan has criticised this theory. The signifier of the lack of the Other, S(A), expresses the very fact that there is no symbol-zero in language which could mediate between signifier and signified. The idea that science could banish the contradictions in the symbolic is

not so far from the schizophrenic's idea that his mother could do so by knowing if he understands a problem or if he does not understand it.

There is some glimmer of hope that this subject may break the circle of his mother's tyranny without falling into the void.

He is fascinated by two mathematical theories: The matrix-theory (sic) and the new computer languages. He has explained to me the reasons for his interest in these new languages. They are object-oriented. With these languages you can construct new software objects which are not foreseen in the ordinary programme.

For example, you are the cashier of a big firm. Suppose that it is not within your competence to establish the final accounts because this is done by the accountant who has his own computer. Not to worry: with the new languages you can do it yourself. My patient sees in this capacity of the new languages to engender new objects a possibility to get out of the circle of ordinary objects.

Perhaps this is only a scientific metaphor. But these object-oriented languages remind me of what Freud wrote about the 'representations of objects' in his *Meta-Psychology*. He affirmed that the schizophrenic removes his drive-investments from these unconscious object-representations, called in German *Sachvorstellungen*.⁷ In his *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*⁸ Lacan refutes the interpretation given by J- B Pontalis of this concept. Pontalis thought that object-representations contradict the theory of the unconscious structured as a language. Lacan is right when he says that *Sache* is not *Ding*. *Sache* is an object manufactured, fabricated by man. (But Lacan is wrong when he affirms that Freud did not use the concept of *Dingvorstellung* (thing-representation)).

It is amazing that Lacan did not use the following argument against Pontalis: when Freud speaks about object-representations he speaks of objects as signifiers and more precisely of signifying objects which are marked by the phallus. This would explain why the schizophrenic has disinvested these objects and why he invests only word-representations treating words like objects. (This is the Freudian theory of 1915). The schizophrenic has no phallic signification. But the Kleinian objects and the classical objects are linked by their phallic marks as J-A Miller has often explained.

If our patient tries to invest objects which are beyond his mother-circle, he chooses those *Sachvorstellungen* (object-representations) which he can generate by his languages.

As we have seen he is rather afraid of all those devices which are connected to the phallus (contracts, social links, subject-object relations, etc). So he arrives at a link with the outer world which he can partly control.

There is also the other side of his perspective. The new languages also offer him the possibility of what is called 'encapsulation'; i.e, the codification of your private messages and documents. This possibility also attracts him. In his analysis he speaks German, his language of 'refuge', as he calls it.

And last but not least there has appeared a discrete phenomenon of erotomania. His friends often have a woman in their life. It can happen that some of them separate from their girlfriends. He now asks if they did so because they thought that their

girlfriends were interested in him.

ENDNOTES:

¹ J. Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 553.

² J. L. Austin, *Performative Utterances*, in *Philosophy Papers*, Oxford, 1979, pp. 233-252.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

⁴ J. Lacan, *Le Sinthesis*, 3/1/1976, in *Ornicar?* VI. p. 15.

⁵ S. Freud, *Triebe und Trieb Schicksale*, SE III, p. 98

⁶ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Introduction à l'oeuvre de Marcel Mauss*, in Marcel Mauss, *Sociologie et anthropologie*, 1950, pp. IX-LII.

⁷ S. Freud, *Das Unbewusste*, in *Studienausgabe*, Vol. III, pp. 155-162.

⁸ *Op. cit.*, chap. IV.