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## Introspection, Schizophrenia, and the Fragmentation of Self

*We are victims of a subjective illusion. . . . In the normal course of things, customs varying greatly from our own always seem puerile.*

—Claude Lévi-Strauss

*“It is high time for us to compare these phenomena with something different”—one may say. —I am thinking, e.g., of mental illnesses.*

—Ludwig Wittgenstein<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

PERHAPS THE MOST BIZARRE of all psychiatric symptoms are the self-disturbances of schizophrenic and schizophreniform patients.

When I am melting I have no hands, I go into a doorway in order not to be trampled on. Everything is flying away from me. In the doorway I can gather together the pieces of my body. It is as if something is thrown in me, bursts me asunder. Why do I divide myself in different pieces? I feel that I am without poise, that my personality is melting and that my ego disappears and that I do not exist anymore. Everything pulls me apart. . . . The skin is the only possible means of keeping the different pieces together. There is no connection between the different parts of my body.<sup>2</sup>

Such experiences—which can involve the loss of the sense of volition and activity, or of the self’s unity, discreteness, or consistency over time—can be difficult or even impossible for the normal person to imagine. They contradict one of the most fundamental assumptions of our culture—what anthropologist Clifford Geertz has described as “the Western conception of the person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic center of awareness, emotion, judgment, and action organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively both against other such wholes and against its social and natural background.”<sup>3</sup>

By much of mainstream, “medical-model” psychiatry, these self-disturbances have been considered to be the key symptoms for the diagnosis of schizophrenia—that strangest and, supposedly, most incomprehensible of mental illnesses. In the various psychoanalytic schools, such symptoms have been understood as the primary indications of regression to early infantile experience, to that state of primitivity which is assumed to be the central explanatory fact about schizophrenic psychosis. But it is not only in psychiatry and psychoanalysis

that these symptoms have been important; they have also played a central role in the imagination of the twentieth-century literary avant-garde—serving there as the objective correlative for what Fredric Jameson has called “the persistent contemporary rhetoric of a fragmentation of the subject.”<sup>4</sup>

Throughout the twentieth century, in works like André Breton’s “Surrealist Manifesto” of 1924 and in more recent books like R. D. Laing’s *The Politics of Experience*, Norman O. Brown’s *Life Against Death*, and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus*, the schizophrenic has been celebrated as the “true hero of desire” or as “an emblem of creative insurrection against rationalist repression linked to social power.”<sup>5</sup> The prevailing image has been Nietzsche’s vision of a “Dionysian madness” of “self-abnegation” and “self-forgetfulness”—where the “*principium individuationis*” collapses to make way for the “endemic ecstasies” of “primordial unity.”<sup>6</sup> Over the last ten or fifteen years, the influence of poststructuralism has intensified interest in notions of a decentered existence, which is often treated as a more authentic and vital mode of being than is the integrated self of normalcy, which Nietzsche considered to be a fiction, “something added and invented and projected behind what there is.”<sup>7</sup> Thus, in *A Future for Astyanax: Character and Desire in Literature*, an often brilliant contemporary investigation (and valorizing) of such decentering or dispersal, Leo Bersani compares the schizophrenic loss of self to the ecstatic surrender of self (“the delights of self-scattering”) that he finds in the writings of Rimbaud, Lautréamont, Genet, and Artaud, and which he contrasts with traditional literature, where the self exists as “an ordered and ordering presence.” In the former cases, says Bersani, it is the heterogeneity of desublimated pre-Oedipal desire that bursts the coherence and boundedness of identity—both through the multiplicity of its yearnings and through an inherent urge toward fusion with the desired object.<sup>8</sup>

The present essay is a critique of these images which have so dominated the understanding of madness in the twentieth century—in psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and the modernist and postmodernist avant-garde. Through taking a closer and, I hope, less polemical look at the lived world of schizophrenic patients, I will propose a very different way of understanding them. Against the medical model’s *denial* of the possibility of interpreting this condition and the psychoanalytic and avant-gardist *choice* of interpretation, I will show that the schizophrenic self-disturbances *are* comprehensible, but not on the analogy of infancy or the unfettered id. To demonstrate this, it will be necessary to trace an alternative genealogy for dissolution of the self—one that is characteristic of certain developments both in philosophy and in fiction and that will be illustrated through a discussion of works by William James and Nathalie Sarraute. While hardly unknown in modern thought, this line of development seems to be readily forgotten or ignored by those who are inclined to denigrate selfhood as a false transcendence and to glorify loss of self as if it were necessarily a more authentic and liberated expression of the free play of desire.<sup>9</sup> My alternative reading of schizophrenia

will be developed through a comparative phenomenological method. In order to understand schizophrenic loss of self, a phenomenon that, in my view, has remained obscure or misunderstood, I will compare it to cases where the alternative genealogy for the dissolution of self is somewhat easier to see. But, though my main purpose is to develop a new and, I think, more accurate reading of certain schizophrenic phenomena, there are also implications for the contemporary discourse on the self. We shall see that, contrary to widespread current assumptions, the decentered or fragmented self can be no less imaginary, and no less a product of what one might call the illusions of the *cogito*, than is its opposite.

(Perhaps I should emphasize before proceeding that my purpose is to illuminate formal affinities between a certain kind of schizophrenic experience and a certain philosophical and aesthetic attitude or stance. I am not saying that these phenomena are alike in all respects; nor, of course, am I asserting that the orientation of James or Sarraute *is* schizophrenic. Also, as should become clear, any notion that there is a sharp boundary between the “schizophrenic” and other human beings is quite foreign to my thesis. I am certainly not trying to reify “schizophrenia,” and I bracket [rather than accept or deny] all assumptions concerning the purported genetic or physiological basis of this endlessly problematic disease. But to avoid the diagnostic term itself would not only be awkward; it would obscure the ways in which my thesis constitutes a critique of traditional approaches to this form of life.)<sup>10</sup>

### **Traditional Interpretations of Schizophrenia**

Before turning to the medical-model and psychoanalytic approaches, it will be useful to consider three additional autobiographical descriptions of self-disturbance by schizophrenic patients:

Gradually I am no longer able to distinguish how much of myself is in me and how much is already in others. I am a conglomeration, a monstrosity, modelled anew each day.

Just as the Church was rent apart by schisms, the most sacred monument that is erected by the human spirit, i.e., its ability to think and decide and will to do, is torn apart by itself. Finally, it is thrown out where it mingles with every other part of the day and judges what it has left behind. Instead of wishing to do things, they are done by something that seems mechanical and frightening because it is able to do things and yet unable to want to or not to want to. . . . The feeling that should dwell within a person is outside longing to come back and yet having taken with it the power to return.

It talks out of me.<sup>11</sup>

Such experiences were the primary source of Karl Jaspers’s influential “doctrine of the abyss”—the notion that the truly schizophrenic symptoms are “entirely inaccessible to us” since they are “mad in the literal sense.” Though Jaspers, a

psychiatrist before he turned to philosophy, was in general the champion of a “verstehende” psychiatry (a psychiatry of meaning or of understanding), he argued that such an approach was impossible in the case of the schizophrenic, the patient who no longer feels himself master of his own thoughts and “seems to suffer under the yoke of an elusive strange power.”<sup>12</sup>

Thus, according to Jaspers’s *General Psychopathology*, which first appeared in 1913, the symptoms of all other types of mental illness—including the delusions of those with manic-depressive or pure paranoid forms of psychosis—are comprehensible as exaggerations of normal states of euphoria, depression, fear, grandiosity, and the like. But the truly schizophrenic patients, with their profound disturbances of selfhood, are “quite incomprehensible, difficult to imagine, and not open to empathy.”<sup>13</sup> (Jaspers assumed that the schizophrenic disorder was purely the result of an as yet unknown organic factor that intruded itself into the psychological sphere and so could not be understood psychologically. It was thus a candidate for “Erklären” but not “Verstehen”) The personality of such a patient is, in the words of the psychiatrist Manfred Bleuler, “totally strange, puzzling, inconceivable, uncanny, and incapable of empathy, even to the point of being sinister and frightening.”<sup>14</sup> Such patients evoke the famous “praecox-feeling”—that aura of strangeness and otherworldliness which many European psychiatrists have seen as the single best criterion for the schizophrenic diagnosis.

The German psychiatrist Kurt Schneider, a member of Jaspers’s school of psychopathological phenomenology, systematized this diagnostic criterion of unbridgeable alienness with his list of “First Rank Symptoms”—delusions and hallucinations that he believed to be especially characteristic of psychosis of the schizophrenic type. All these symptoms are quite specific, and all involve passivization or other fundamental distortions of the normal self-world relationship. The patient feels, for example, that his thoughts, actions, feelings, or perceptions are imposed on him, or are under the control of some external being or force. He may hear his thoughts aloud, as if spoken outside him, or may feel that his thoughts are broadcast throughout the world.<sup>15</sup> Elements of this list and of Jaspers’s doctrine of the abyss are incorporated into the current official diagnostic system of the American Psychiatric Association, which states that such “bizarre” delusions—defined as beliefs “which have no possible basis in fact”—are a sign of schizophrenia.<sup>16</sup>

The schizophrenic, it seems, is psychiatry’s quintessential Other—the patient whose very essence is “incomprehensibility” itself.

But there has been an influential alternative to this “medical-model” view—the developmental perspective of psychoanalysis, which offers the possibility of both an empathic understanding and a theoretical grasp of this seemingly alien form of life. Anna Freud sums up the essence of the psychoanalytic view of such

“severely deteriorated” patients. Supposedly, they manifest “those primitive levels of mental life where the distinction between the self and the environment is lacking,” where the “most primitive processes of merging with the object” are prevalent, and where thought processes have undergone “lowering to the level of the ‘primary process.’”<sup>17</sup> According to the authors of *Chronic Schizophrenia*, a psychoanalytic study, a knowledge of such essentially infantile forms of consciousness “therefore aids us in attempting to cross the gap which separates us from the schizophrenic patient.”<sup>18</sup> Some version of this regression hypothesis continues to be accepted by the vast majority of those who do psychotherapy with schizophrenic patients.<sup>19</sup>

The psychoanalytic approach to “loss of ego boundaries” as a consequence of regression was first worked out in a famous paper by Victor Tausk, an ill-fated member of Freud’s original circle. The delusion discussed in Tausk’s “On the Influencing Machine in Schizophrenia” (1919) incorporates most of the Schneiderian First Rank Symptoms. And, as one can see from the following excerpt, it certainly evokes the praecox-feeling:

The patient is Miss Natalija A., thirty-one years old, formerly a student of philosophy. She declares that for six and a half years she has been under the influence of an electrical machine made in Berlin. . . . It has the form of a human body, indeed, the patient’s own form, though not in all details. . . . The trunk has the shape of a lid, resembling the lid of a coffin and is lined with silk or velvet. . . . She cannot see the head—she says that she is not sure about it and she does not know whether the machine bears her own head. . . . The outstanding fact about the machine is that it is being manipulated by someone in a certain manner, and everything that occurs to it happens also to her. When someone strikes this machine, she feels the blow in the corresponding part of her own body. . . . The inner parts of the machine consist of electric batteries, which are supposed to represent the internal organs of the human body. Those who handle the machine produce a slimy substance in her nose, disgusting smells, dreams, thoughts, feelings, and disturb her while she is thinking, reading or writing. At an earlier stage, sexual sensations were produced in her through manipulation of the genitalia of the machine.<sup>20</sup>

Normally (at least in our culture), perceptions, thoughts, and actions are lived as if from within, with an implicit or semiconscious sense of intention and control. Also, it is normal to have the sense that one’s own consciousness belongs to oneself, and that unless one communicates one’s inner life through word or gesture, it will remain private. How, then, is one to understand Natalija’s experience, in which all that would normally be felt as purposive or purposeful—the movement of an arm or the semicontrolled play of attention across a set of thoughts—is felt to be imposed upon her? And imposed in a manner far more absolute than coercion (which would involve a sense of going along with a demand under duress). To Miss Natalija, it is as if her own actions and experiences are but epiphenomena—only the automatic, immediate, and passive reflection of what happens to the machine whose exact location can only be said to be “elsewhere.”<sup>21</sup>

Tausk interpreted Natalija’s feeling of having her movements, sensations,

and desires controlled by an external force, as well as her sense of her body as something separate and apart (the Natalija-machine lying elsewhere), as revivals of the foetal and nursing stages. He reasoned that, since these developmental stages preceded the acquisition of self-world boundaries or of a sense of competence and control over one's physical being, it would be a time when the body would feel to the infant like part of a foreign environment. To the infant, bodily sensations and impulses would seem to come "as if from an alien outer world."<sup>22</sup>

Freud, in attendance at Tausk's presentation of his paper, agreed with this regression interpretation of the loss of ego boundaries, and he suggested some additional nuances.<sup>23</sup> Since that time psychoanalytic writers of virtually all persuasions—classical, ego-psychological, object-relational, and self-psychological—have interpreted such profound distortions of the normal sense of self as indicating a deep regression to the "original infantile story"—to a primitive mode of experience dominated by primary process thinking, by hallucinatory wish fulfillment, and by the absence of an "observing ego."<sup>24</sup> One contemporary psychoanalytic psychiatrist, for example, describes schizophrenics as manifesting a weak ego characterized by "derangement of purposive and selective attention," "deterioration in conceptual powers," and "little capacity to reflect on the self and on immediate experience."<sup>25</sup> The notion that all forms of psychopathology are essentially to be understood as forms of fixation-at or regression-to immature stages of cognitive, affective, and conative development is, in fact, probably the most fundamental premise of psychoanalytic theory—as unquestioned today as in the time of Tausk. One currently influential psychoanalyst of the "object-relations" school recently went so far as to write that psychopathology gives us a window on early development analogous to the view of ancient Rome given us by Pompeii.<sup>26</sup>

Broad orienting assumptions, like the primitivity and the incomprehensibility interpretations, are of more than academic importance since they largely determine both our theoretical understanding and our therapeutic approach to such patients.<sup>27</sup> For example, those who accept Jaspers's doctrine of the abyss—whether explicitly or implicitly—are likely to have a low opinion of the importance, or even the possibility, of therapeutic communication with such patients. Such an attitude has hardly encouraged psychotherapeutic efforts, and it may well increase the patient's sense of alienation from the social world. It is no accident that this attitude so often prevails among those who, on the basis of some form of biochemical or genetic reductionism, would deny that psychological or social factors play a significant role in the etiology and maintenance of the schizophrenic condition. Such theorists and therapists often assume that the strange actions, communications, and experiences of schizophrenics are not "meaningful" since they are but causal byproducts of an as yet unidentified state of neurophysiological disorganization.<sup>28</sup>

The primitivity interpretation has an appeal that is different but equally powerful—what Wittgenstein, in his lectures on Freud, described as "the attraction

which mythological explanations have, explanations which say that this is all a repetition of something that has happened before.” And, as he pointed out, “When people do accept or adopt this, then certain things seem much clearer and easier for them.”<sup>29</sup> The seductiveness of such a view may, however, be dangerous. The primitivity interpretation seems to be inherently condescending since it implies that schizophrenic forms of experience and expression lack complexity, sophistication, and validity. According to this grand orienting assumption—a sort of developmental “Great Chain of Being” that locates all forms of psychological functioning on a single dimension of relative perfection—psychological health and psychological maturity are virtually synonymous.

The conception takes for granted, among other things, that the Cartesian subject-object distinction and the Western conception of discrete and integral selfhood represent objective truth; that their absence in the adult indicates both psychopathology and—what is synonymous—psychological immaturity; and, finally, that attainment of these concepts is the telos of normal development and the appropriate goal for psychotherapy. Further, this primitivity view has often led to the assumption that the schizophrenic needs to be brought up or socialized, and that the therapist should play the role of benign and wise parent who gives the patient a second chance to be nurtured toward maturity. (Anna Freud wrote that the appropriate therapeutic techniques “are in many respects identical with the methods used in the upbringing of infants.”)<sup>30</sup>

Such a notion of schizophrenia is remarkably reminiscent of the evolutionism that once prevailed in cultural anthropology, where tribal man was assumed to be ruled by rampant instinct and to lack the capacity for abstraction and for self-awareness attained in later stages of ontogenetic and phylogenetic development. Lévi-Strauss described “our traditional picture of this primitiveness . . . of that creature barely emerged from an animal condition and still a prey to his needs and instincts who has so often been imagined . . . that consciousness governed by emotions and lost in a maze of confusion and [magical] participation.”<sup>31</sup> Compare this to psychoanalyst Marguerite Sechehaye’s vision of madness as the triumph of the id:

Freed of social control, stripped of logical and moral imperatives, deprived of conscious directives, [schizophrenic thinking] sends its roots to the very heart of the desires, the dreads and the fundamental drives of which it is the cherished instrument of expression. Invested with an affective potential drawn from reality, it charges the inanimate world of objects with life, energy and the strength of the drives from which it emanates.<sup>32</sup>

The romanticized view taken by many antipsychiatrists and radical critics of psychoanalysis has been, in its essence, remarkably similar to this orthodox view—though the value judgment is reversed. Thus, for Norman O. Brown, R. D. Laing, Deleuze and Guattari, and their followers, schizophrenia has stood for life as against mind, instinct (the “desiring machines”) as against oppressive self-

consciousness, the freedom of “nomad thought” as against the illusions of logic and self-control. Deleuze and Guattari believe that the schizophrenic is “closest to the beating heart of reality, to an intense point identical with the production of the real”; they quote Wilhelm Reich’s statement that “what belongs specifically to the schizophrenic patient is that . . . he experiences the vital biology of the body. . . . With respect to their experiencing of life, the neurotic patient and the perverted individual are to the schizophrenic as the petty thief is to the daring safecracker.”<sup>33</sup> But the radicals, no less than the traditional analysts, assume that the schizophrenic lacks the self-control, awareness of social convention, and reflexivity of “civilized” consciousness. For both radicals and traditionalists, the schizophrenic could be said to exist in the stage of mythical thought—the moment when, in Cassirer’s words, consciousness has not yet raised itself from its stupor.<sup>34</sup>

One must certainly admit that these regression and Dionysian interpretations of the loss of self do *have* a certain compellingness and plausibility. Indeed, one might well doubt whether there could be any other way of understanding such radical deviations from the normal adult form of life. Is there an alternative to the condescension (or the glorification) of these interpretations and the acceptance of an absolute and unassimilable Otherness, Jaspers’s dizzying abyss? To answer this question, I will begin by considering the meditation on selfhood of William James, the greatest of philosophical psychologists and a figure poised at the threshold of the modernist age. His chapter on “The Consciousness of Self” in *Principles of Psychology* is perhaps the clearest example of an alternative genealogy of the loss of self. For, though this is not his purpose, James’s analysis is a lucid illustration of what one might call a central “paradox of the reflexive”—that seemingly contradictory, yet widespread, process by which acute *self*-consciousness has the effect actually of *effacing* the self, while simultaneously obscuring its own role in this effacement. As we shall see, such a process is of the utmost importance for understanding what seem to be core features of many schizophrenic patients.

### **Consciousness and the Self in James and Sarraute**

William James begins his discussion by asserting that the feeling of a “central nucleus of the Self,” something that gives one’s thoughts and sensations the sense of being unified rather than of “flying about loose,” is virtually a defining feature of any consciousness we might call human.<sup>35</sup> Compared to this unifying core, the other elements of the stream of subjective life seem “transient external possessions, of which each in turn can be disowned, whilst that which disowns them remains.” James then asks about this feeling of an “innermost centre within the circle.” Of what does this “sanctuary within the citadel” really

consist? If we choose to become aware of this feeling and to direct our attention to it, what, he wants to know, will we then discover?

First James gives one answer. He argues that the feeling of control over and that of identity with one's stream of experience are related: the part or aspect of one's stream of experience that seems most intimately allied to the self—that which one feels one *is*—tends to be the part from which one's sense of activity emanates. This “active element in all consciousness” is, he says, a spiritual something “which seems to *go out* to meet these qualities and contents, whilst [the qualities] seem to *come in* to be received by it. It is what welcomes or rejects. It presides over the perception of sensations” and “is the source of effort and attention, and the place from which appear to emanate the fiats of the will.” The two aspects of selfhood—unity and a sense of active intentionality—seem to be inseparable and interdependent.

But, having given this description of the spiritual self, James immediately finds something unsatisfactory in it. Descriptions like “a spiritual something which seems to go out to meet” or “what welcomes or rejects” seem to him to be too general and vague. Such descriptions—the findings of what I shall call “casual” rather than “exigent” introspection—do not for James have the feeling that comes of hitting bottom. Consequently, he takes a harder and more careful look. He tries, as it were, to seize a given moment of experience and to regard it more intently—to be a keener observer and thus to ferret out the microscopic and concrete details of the lived event. What James then finds, adopting this “exigent” mode, is that there *is* no purely spiritual element at all: for, “whenever my introspective glance succeeds in turning round quickly enough to catch one of these manifestations of spontaneity in the act, all it can ever feel distinctively is some bodily process, for the most part taking place within the head.” James offers several examples, but one should suffice: when attending to a thought that has some quasivisual representation, the sense of volitional control that one has turns out, on close scrutiny, to be based on the feeling of “a fluctuating play of pressures, convergences, divergences, and accommodations in my eyeballs.” Here, incidentally, we see an important feature of the exigent observational stance—the radical separation it sets up between the introspecting self, which is passive, a mere watcher, and the watched self, the distant place where all activity seems to occur.

Once it is carefully examined, James finds that the “Self of selves,” the “citadel within the sanctuary,” is reducible to “a collection of these peculiar motions in the head or between the head and throat.” It appears, then, that “all that is experienced is, strictly considered, *objective*,” even including that “imaginary being denoted by the pronoun ‘I.’” When we scrutinize our experience, we discover nothing inner or active—only a variety of kinesthetic or physiological processes happening out there all by themselves. But this is tantamount to saying that the “I,” the inner sanctuary of identity and intentionality, does not exist, since the

criteria that had seemed to define its presence, a sense of relative innerness and activity, seem to be revealed as illusory on more careful examination: "At present, then," James writes, "the only conclusion I come to is the following: That (in some persons at least) the part of the innermost Self which is most vividly felt turns out to consist for the most part of a collection of cephalic movements or 'adjustments' which, for want of attention and reflection, usually fail to be perceived and classed as what they are." An identical conclusion was reached by other early twentieth-century "introspectionists," like the psychologist E. B. Titchener, who advocated an observational methodology of exigent inner observation and argued on the basis of his findings against the existence of free will.<sup>36</sup>

Unlike Titchener, however, the ever wise, ever reasonable James retained a degree of tentativeness about this seeming discovery—even though he did not follow his doubts to their logical conclusion. In another chapter of his *Principles*, "The Stream of Thought," he points out that introspection itself seems inherently to contain a potentially misleading prejudice in favor of the definite and the distinct.<sup>37</sup> As a result, introspection, especially in its exigent form, is naturally prone to the error of overemphasizing the "substantive" parts of the stream of experience and neglecting what James calls the "transitive" (the latter includes such things as feelings of relationship or of activity). He compares trying to see and specify the transitive to the futile attempt to grasp motion by seizing a spinning top, or to see darkness by turning up a lamp very quickly. The phenomenon sought is literally effaced by the very act of looking for it. That is, as soon as one tries to introspect about a transitive aspect, one's introspective glance is likely either to settle upon some substantive part of the stream or else to distort the lived reality of the stream by rendering the transitive part into a substantive one. James states that, as a result of this tendency to distortion inherent in introspection, many philosophers and psychologists have been led to theories of consciousness that deny the very existence of that which cannot be unambiguously and directly observed.

It is not difficult to see how this illusion born of observational method might dissolve the experience of the active and integral self, for the latter is an experience likely to be carried by transitive rather than substantive parts of the stream of consciousness. Indeed, James's own exigent analysis of the consciousness of self is a perfect *illustration*, just as his discussion of observation's bias for substantive over transitive aspects of the stream of experience is a perfect *explanation*, of how this loss can come about. His discussion shows how loss of self may develop *not* from a weakening of the observing ego or a lowering of the level of consciousness but, to the contrary, from a hypertrophy of attentive, self-reflexive awareness.

Oddly enough, however, William James does not turn his analysis around upon himself in the way one might expect; at no point does he explicitly reject the validity of his own "discovery" of the actual nonexistence of the inner and

active self. As a result, his own position seems to be transitional and not altogether consistent. On the one hand, he clearly has a more than intuitive grasp of how the answer to a quasimetaphysical question like that of *the* nature of the self depends on the stance of the observer or asker of the question. However, James does not actually contextualize his “discovery” of the nonexistence of the inner and active self by presenting it as but one of several equally valid even if mutually contradictory truths (i.e., the self exists, the self does not exist). It seems that James was not able to bring himself completely to reject the validity of a “sensationalist” metaphysics or an introspectionist methodology.

Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose later thought developed partially in reaction to James's *Principles of Psychology*, criticized such failures to contextualize, which he saw as leading to all kinds of unjustified “metaphysical” assertions and unnecessary quandaries: “To get clear about philosophical problems,” he wrote in the *Blue Book*, “it is useful to become conscious of the apparently unimportant details of the particular situation in which we are inclined to make a certain metaphysical assertion.” In Wittgenstein's view, staring often played a particularly important role in what we might call the phenomenology of philosophical illusion.<sup>38</sup> (He claims, for example, that solipsistic assertions are more likely to seem true when one is passively watching than when one is walking about, active and involved in life.)<sup>39</sup> In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein takes up James's claim that the self consists mainly of “peculiar motions in the head and between the head and throat” and concludes that this “discovery” is a function of the introspector's attitude: “And James' introspection showed, not the meaning of the word ‘self’ (so far as it means something like ‘person’, ‘human being’, ‘he himself’, ‘I myself’), nor any analysis of such a thing, but the state of a philosopher's attention when he says the word ‘self’ to himself and tries to analyze its meaning. (And a good deal could be learned from this.)”<sup>40</sup>

Wittgenstein wrote of the unnaturalness of a mode of expression or thought that puts states of consciousness or of willing at a remove, as if they were something that, in the normal case, were contemplated or willed (i.e., as if one had to *perceive* that one was conscious or, by a second act, had to will to will). It is not that such an inner division is impossible but that, when it occurs, it sets up an aberrant state of mind: “The sentence ‘I perceive I am conscious’ does not say I am conscious, but that my attention is disposed in such-and-such a way.”<sup>41</sup> Such a disposition of attention tends to undermine the usual modes of awareness and of intentional engagement in action and experience: “What does it mean to say e.g. that self-observation makes my actions, my movements, uncertain? I cannot observe myself unobserved.” “My own behavior is sometimes—but *rarely*—the object of my own observation. And this is connected with the fact that I intend my behavior.”<sup>42</sup> The form of illusion Wittgenstein is warning against here is particularly difficult to overcome; for its source is the very thing that can so often be a prerequisite of clear understanding—withdrawal from activity into dispassion.

sionate, disengaged contemplation. The condition underlying such illusion seems, in fact, to be rather paradoxical—a failure to be sufficiently self-conscious about the effects of one’s own self-consciousness, to adequately distance oneself from distanciation itself.<sup>43</sup>

Despite the fact that all the elements of this insight are present in James’s own analyses, James, unlike Wittgenstein, failed to turn the insight against himself and thereby to transcend his own mode of self-consciousness and the metaphysical conclusions to which it led. As we shall see, something like this failure seems also to be characteristic of many schizophrenics—even (or perhaps especially) in cases where one might have most expected such transcending self-awareness, that is, where the involitional urge is strongest and self-monitoring seems to be a constant and inescapable process.

While there are earlier precedents for this loss of self associated with exigent introspection, such developments seem to have become especially common in certain strains of modernist literature and thought.<sup>44</sup> One of the best discussions of such developments, the novelist Nathalie Sarraute’s well-known essay “L’Ère du soupçon,” considers the disappearance in the modernist novel of the foundations of traditional narrative—consistent characters engaged in coherent actions and an integrated and understandable author/narrator. Sarraute explicitly denies that such developments, which her own fiction exemplifies, can be understood as a regression to an infantile form of consciousness. Rather, she claims, they show “an unusually sophisticated state of mind” and illustrate Stendhal’s statement about the modern age: “The genius of suspicion has appeared on the scene.”<sup>45</sup> From novels like those of Sarraute, one can get a vivid sense of the lived world that results when everyday life is pervaded by a kind of exigent introspection.

Sarraute uses the term *tropisms* to refer to the main topic of her own fiction. With this word that suggests a vegetable automaticity, she refers to the subtle movements of the inner life that usually go unnoticed yet that for her constitute the true essence of human existence. For, according to a view that now seems almost orthodox in some circles, the truth about human experience is veiled by the deceptive sense of unity and control, those illusions underlying the “bourgeois” notions of Identity and Willpower. Human consciousness is in fact constituted by tiny and virtually autonomous events that are at once exterior *and* interior—the fleeting memories, half-remembered phrases, and semiconscious urges and sensations that move independently across one’s field of awareness, rather like water bugs across a pond.

Sarraute sees increasing introspection and objectification as the dominant trend in the development of the modern novel. In contrast with earlier explorations of the inner life that treated the “formless, soft matter that yields and dis-

integrates under the scalpel of the analysis” (the stuff of casual introspection, perhaps), the universe of the contemporary novel, though mental, is hard and opaque. The typical protagonist-narrator is someone whose “relation to himself is as though someone else were observing and speaking of him” (but from within).<sup>46</sup> Rather like a man in a cartoon, he examines his thoughts and actions as if they existed apart from him, in a bubble that threatens to fill the world. Thus Alain, the protagonist of Sarraute’s *Between Life and Death*, sits alone, watching words and sensations move across his field of awareness, almost as if these phenomena had no special connection with him. Indeed, for this modernist Everyman, even his own “self”—if one can even use the term in such a context—seems to be something he contemplates from a remove:

The little drops of words mount in a thin jet, they shove one another, then fall down again. Others mount, and others still. . . . That must absolutely happen again. To let oneself drift once more. . . . To let oneself float, curled up to oneself, subject to the slightest eddy. . . . To wait until there are outlined in the thickness of the ooze those halting progressions, those retractions, until, once more, something transpires.<sup>47</sup>

The protagonist-narrator seems to look so hard at his own subjective stream of experience that in the process his feeling of selfhood is forgotten, even in a sense destroyed. The harder he looks, the more the objects of his awareness come to seem to be all that exists, the more the sense of a self transcending this flux disappears. This process of externalization is so pervasive that one might even be tempted to reject the very term “*introspection*”—were it not for the fact that the observed phenomena do retain a certain subjective quality: they are sense data, not things.<sup>48</sup>

This phenomenalism, the product of a kind of exigent introspection or hyperreflexive involution, thus leads to a dispersal. By a process that Paul Valéry once called “a centrifuging of the self,” all the phenomena of awareness are, as it were, spun outwards and away.<sup>49</sup> And Sarraute ends *The Planetarium* by asserting the truth that this centrifuging reveals: “Everything in him, everything about him is coming apart. . . . I think we’re all of us, really, a bit like that.”<sup>50</sup>

There is another possible consequence of such hyperreflexivity that should be mentioned: it seems that, along with an *externalization* of what would normally be felt to be inner or subjective, hyperreflexivity can also bring about a characteristic *internalization*, a subjectivization of what is usually external and objective. This is most explicit in certain works of the contemporary “postmodernist” avant-garde where the loss of the sense of cohesive and active selfhood has a somewhat different focus, where the dizzying tendency toward self-consciousness and self-reference characterizes not so much the character as the artist, the audience or even the artwork itself. Many such works seem in this way to undermine or dismantle themselves by concentrating attention upon their own status as novels or paintings—or even on their ephemeral existence as acts of writing or painting (or

reading or looking, in cases where the self-conscious focus is on audience rather than creator). Under these circumstances, the world depicted seems to be subordinated to the consciousness by which it is constituted. This preoccupation is imaged in the famous notion of the “aporia” or “mise en abîme”—the infinite involution, the vertiginously self-referential abyss, that occurs when two mirrors are placed face to face, or when a photograph shows a photograph in which the first photograph appears, thus depicting another photograph depicting itself, and so on, endlessly.

In the presence of such artistic and linguistic self-awareness, it is not only the distinct selfhood and felt actuality of both author and character that may easily dissolve; also, subject matter and external reality may be drained of all sense of importance and substantiality. Thus, by a strange paradox of the reflexive, language and consciousness begin to seem, on the one hand, pathetically inadequate to the task of representing anything outside themselves and, on the other hand, immensely powerful since they seem to contain all that exists. This strange, somehow autistic combination of omnipotence and impotence emerges in post-modernist novelist Gilbert Sorrentino’s description of his own writing: “These people aren’t real. I’m making them up as I go along, any section that threatens to flesh them out, or make them ‘walk off the page,’ will be excised. They should, rather, walk into the page, and break up, disappear.”<sup>51</sup>

It would be a mistake, it seems to me, to equate the tradition of aesthetic antirationalism described in Bersani’s *A Future for Astyanax* with this tradition of hyperreflexivity. True, what Bersani calls the self as an “ordered and ordering presence” disappears for both James and Sarraute—as it does also in the works of Lautréamont, Rimbaud, and Genet. And the experiential world depicted by Sarraute and Sorrentino may also be reduced to a series of discontinuous, fragmentary scenes that lack the solidity and constancy of real objects and that dissolve one into another with all the fluidity of images. However, there are also important differences between Bersani’s phantasmagoria of the desiring imagination and the self-referential “mise en abîme” that we have been examining. In the former tradition, at least as Bersani conceives it, the poet “coerce[s] the world into becoming an excited version of his desires”; “The person is dismembered by the very fertility of its resources,” dissolved in “exuberant fusion with those scenes which offer themselves, literally, as the theatre of our desires.”<sup>52</sup> In this “triumph of desiring fantasy,” the inner self dissolves outward into the objects of its yearnings. In the latter tradition, by contrast, the self is fragmented principally through turning *away* from a world of desired objects and *toward* inner experiences and an increasingly devitalized self; further, it is not desire or emotion that dominate but the relentless impulse to *know*. Though there may, of course, be some works that manage to include—perhaps even to synthesize—these two tendencies, the trends do seem, if not exactly incompatible, at least in fundamental tension with each other.<sup>53</sup>

Given the widespread acceptance of psychoanalytic notions of schizophrenia, we should not be surprised that Bersani, like so many others, assimilates schizophrenic loss of self to the former, Dionysian tradition.<sup>54</sup> But let us now turn to the realm of madness to see which of these examples—Bersani’s phantasmagoria of the desiring imagination or James’s exigent introspection—might provide a better model for understanding what occurs in actual schizophrenic patients.

### **Madness**

In many cases of schizophrenia, it does make sense to interpret the loss of self as involving an exigent introspection akin to that of James and Sarraute. In such cases, the suspicious scrutinizing seems to break beyond the realm of philosophical speculation or aesthetic experience to supplant the ordinary modes of everyday life. Let us consider the lived world of Natalija, the patient described by Victor Tausk who felt her every thought, image, or sensation to be an epiphenomenon of what happened to a Natalija-machine lying elsewhere (a patient who, as the reader will recall, manifested many of the supposedly incomprehensible First Rank Symptoms of schizophrenia).

As we have seen through our discussion of James, the person who directs an intense stare toward the stream of his own experience is unlikely to find any concrete evidence of his own identity, innerness, or volition. Even his own bodily sensations will seem separate from him, since the very fact of scrutinizing will make them seem out there and apart. To experience one’s own sensations as having their original locus in another version of one’s own body, an influencing machine not under one’s own control, would seem an appropriate way of symbolizing such an experience (and of providing a subjective explanation for it). On this view, the velvet that lines the lid of Natalija’s machine might be understood as symbolizing Natalija’s tactile awareness of her own body as lived in the mode of intense introspection. Were it not for the presence of the exigently introspective attitude, the kinesthetic sensations of her own body would remain transitive and implicit phenomena—more processlike than objectlike. But, because of the presence of this introspective mode, these sensations take on a static and substantive form; hence, they come to be symbolized in the form of a thing, a piece of velvet.

I am suggesting that we might see the influencing machine as a late-stage symptom of a certain introversion, a crystallization of a phenomenological world in which explicit attention has come to be trained on the kinesthetic sensations and body-image experiences that would usually be transparent and unthematized, that would normally remain latent while the external world occupied the focus of awareness. On this interpretation, the influencing machine is a projected image not of the physical body but of the subjective body. It is as if the lived body

had been, so to speak, turned inside out and solidified, reified by the intensity of a self-directed gaze. Further, this inside-out body seems almost to fill the universe; the world beyond the self has been reduced to a room located in some vague elsewhere and peopled by phantoms whose only function is to manipulate and describe the Natalija-machine lying before them.

In many cases, the progression of the disease is quite consistent with such an interpretation. The most common “premorbid personality” of schizophrenics is “schizoid”—characterized by intense social alienation and extreme self-consciousness. In one particularly clear and, in many ways, typical autobiographical account, a schizophrenic who developed delusions of influence describes himself as having been from “very early in life an observer of my own mental peculiarities, to a degree which I think must be a very rare exception.”<sup>55</sup> Tausk himself pointed out that the illness of such patients often begins with mild experiences of estrangement, as was the case with Natalija. As attention turns inward, the patient may begin to notice and feel distanced from what was previously felt to be closely associated with the self. The saliva in the patient’s mouth, or the sound of his own name, may begin to feel odd to him, or his bodily sensations or thoughts may seem to exist at a remove.<sup>56</sup> Such experiences feed upon themselves. As the patient’s own strange sensations and thoughts attract his attention, this attention itself, which takes the sensations as its object, can make the sensations seem all the more distant, external, and concrete. The process seems to involve not immersion in the sensory world but a detachment akin to phenomenological “reflection,” to that contemplative stance that, as Maurice Merleau-Ponty put it, “slackens the intentional threads which attach us to the world and brings them to our notice.”<sup>57</sup>

Eventually, the patient who thus steps back from his involvement may begin to feel as if his sensations and thoughts originated outside his own body or mind. He may begin to hear his own thoughts as if they were words spoken outside his head, or to feel that his actions, sensations, or emotions are somehow being imposed upon him from without (Schneider’s “First Rank Symptoms”). Some catatonic patients actually feel guilty about stopping their own ongoing movements since they experience their bodies and actions as things existing apart from them with which they have no right to interfere. This can readily lead to a sense of dispersal; for, without a unifying sense of intention, the “Self of selves” breaks up into bits that spin outwards:

I get shaky in the knees and my chest is like a mountain in front of me, and my body actions are different. The arms and legs are apart and away from me and they go on their own. That’s when I feel I am the other person and copy their movements, or else stop and stand like a statue. I have to stop to find out whether my hand is in my pocket or not.

Another schizophrenic patient said:

I feel my body breaking up into bits. I get all mixed up so that I don't know myself. I feel like more than one person when this happens. I'm falling apart into bits. . . . I'm frightened to say a word in case everything goes fleeing from me so that there's nothing in my mind. It puts me into a trance that's worse than death. There's a kind of hypnotism going on.<sup>58</sup>

This progression of simultaneous involution and externalization may end in the formation of a systematized delusion that overcomes the chaos and disintegration described by these patients. This seems to be the case with the development of an influencing-machine delusion—a belief that stabilizes the world by filling it with a quasi-external symbol of the hyperreflexive consciousness, while also providing for the patient a subjective explanation of the distorted, passivized experiences she is undergoing.

The reader will recall that, according to the traditional primitivity view, self-conscious awareness is absent or severely attenuated in schizophrenia; indeed, to the extent that such forms of consciousness *are* present, the illness is assumed to be less severe. The psychoanalytic writers Thomas Freeman, John Cameron, and Andrew McGhie are quite explicit on this point: “As we regard the absence of reflective awareness to be one of the chief aspects of the schizophrenic disease process, we must regard any appearance of such awareness as a therapeutically hopeful sign, signifying, as it does, that the ego is momentarily clear-cut and stable.”<sup>59</sup> Invoking both Piagetian and psychoanalytic concepts, Freeman, et al., argue that weakness of reflective consciousness is intimately connected with disturbances of identity. This means, in the vocabulary of psychoanalysis, that the attenuation of “observing ego” (the self-monitoring capacity of the psyche) and of “self” (the sense of the reality, discreteness, and cohesiveness of one’s being) are complementary—interdependent characteristics of primitive stages of consciousness.<sup>60</sup> Accordingly, many psychoanalysts have recommended psychotherapeutic approaches whose main purpose is actually to encourage introspection and the development of an “observing ego.”<sup>61</sup> This assumption of the interdependence of self and observing ego, and of the diminishment of both in schizophrenia, has been made by virtually all writers who attempt an interpretation of the schizophrenic condition—including psychologists whose orientation is not psychoanalytic, and also, as we have seen, including many in the literary avant-garde.<sup>62</sup>

In *The Origins of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*, for example, the cognitive psychologist Julian Jaynes portrays schizophrenia as a phylogenetic throwback to the “bicameral” period prior to 1000 B.C. This was a time when, according to his thesis, human beings (or rather, protohumans) acted automatically on the basis of neurological commands because they had not yet developed the capacity for volitional behavior or for true consciousness—which he defines as requiring the capacity for consciousness *of* consciousness (self-

consciousness). In Jaynes's view, schizophrenics are characterized by a greater than normal "in-the-worldness." Instead of having psychological "distance" from the stimulus world, such patients are virtually drowning in sensory data. Jaynes sees the loss in such patients of the experience of selfhood—he calls it the "erosion of the analog 'I'"—as a consequence of their inability to introspect, to think about thinking, and thereby to pay attention to a kind of inner "Mind-Space" where one's consciousness is felt to be located. The famous auditory hallucinations so characteristic of schizophrenics are, he argues, really the psychological manifestations of the neurological commands that, in the "bicameral" period, served to orient and direct the actions of individuals too unevolved to exercise conscious deliberation or personal control over their thought and behavior. (As a way of imagining bicameral awareness, Jaynes suggests the unconscious part of a driver's mind that attends with automatized efficiency to the process of driving an automobile along a familiar road, without deliberation or reflective awareness of the fact that one is driving.)<sup>63</sup>

But we have seen that an alternative interpretation of what Jaynes calls erosion of the analog "I" is possible: far from necessarily *sustaining* a sense of self, a strong observing ego may actually undermine it. Dissolution of self need not, it seems, necessarily be taken as indicating a primitive or Dionysian absence of reflective awareness. But, then one must ask if there is any way of choosing. What reason, if any, is there to prefer the hyperreflexive interpretation to the more usual ones—regression to infancy or the emergence of unrestrained desire—as a way of understanding these anomalies of schizophreniform thought and action? In answering this question, I will first examine certain key instances of schizophrenic First Rank Symptoms, as exemplified by a patient named Jonathan Lang, and then will consider aspects of the general mood and structure of the schizophrenic world. A careful reflection on these phenomena reveals the crucial inadequacy of the traditional images of madness.

Like other advocates of the primitivity interpretation, Jaynes suggests that the quintessential example of auditory hallucination in schizophrenia is the "command hallucination" obeyed without hesitation or conscious reflection.<sup>64</sup> In fact, however, the most characteristic schizophrenic auditory hallucinations, those listed by Schneider as First Rank Symptoms, do not fit this description. Schneider lists two specific types, and both involve hesitation or self-monitoring: two voices *arguing* about what the patient should do, or one voice mocking, criticizing, or *commenting* on what he is doing or thinking.<sup>65</sup> The following is a description by Jonathan Lang, a schizophrenic with paranoid and catatonic features, of his own experience of these symptoms. Lang describes hearing two types of voices, which he calls "thoughts-out-loud" and which, according to his own report, "the conscious self neither initiates nor anticipates." I quote at length to convey a sense of this schizophrenic's characteristic style of experience and expression:

These two respective styles correlate fairly highly with various orientations of the ego. When the ego has an overt orientation, as in reading or writing, or in observation of the environment, the verbal productions of the thoughts-out-loud take the form of a running presentation of verbals suited to the activity holding the interest of the ego, adding an occasional side remark addressed to the ego. For example, if the individual is reading, the thoughts-out-loud reproduce the words of the book the individual is reading, sometimes making a comment on a passage. When the orientation of the ego is more strictly introvert, as for example in reflection, the verbal productions often take the form of an imaginary conversation between the individual and some person with whom the individual is acquainted.<sup>66</sup>

Such voices seem to represent less a *lack of* self-monitoring and conscious deliberation (as Jaynes suggests) than an exaggerated *expression of* such processes.

Indeed, it seems that, when Lang's consciousness is extroverted, the voices involve a consciousness of consciousness, usually shadowing but sometimes disrupting the intentional act: "The thoughts-out-loud [tend] to provide verbalization of the thought trends of the ego whenever the ego develops a strong orientation. However, sometimes the thoughts-out-loud continued to present foreign ideas despite the fact the ego is trying to engage in activities which demand words." When he is introverted, the voices engage in an inner dialogue of deliberation, hesitancy, and argument:

In connection with the expression of foreign ideas, the verbal production of the thoughts-out-loud usually takes the form of monologues attempting to persuade the ego to adopt a belief in the authority of the agent behind the thoughts-out-loud and to accept a Messianic fixation. Attached to these monologues are expressions of the thoughts of the ego concerning the arguments. Another variant is the presentation of arguments seeking to persuade the individual to specific acts.<sup>67</sup>

This is hardly the lived world Jaynes portrays—a nonconscious, automatized world devoid of inner mind-space. One might more accurately characterize the voices as an "externalization of involution"—a way in which the patient's closely watched inner life fills the external world, virtually crowding out everything else. (In this respect, the voices are reminiscent of the influencing machine that so dominates Natalija's experience of the "external" world.) The thoughts-out-loud seem, in fact, to represent a bringing to explicit awareness of the essential but usually implicit structures of human consciousness itself (which Lang seems to experience as primarily linguistic, a realm of inner dialogue). One might even speculate that, in such a world, command hallucinations would function primarily as an attempt to *escape* via action from such anxious self-awareness and paralyzing ambivalence.

In another article, Jonathan Lang describes his consciousness as divided into three selves—or perhaps one should say three nonselves, since each of these realms of being (even what he calls the "quasinormaloid stratum") is felt to exist

at a remove, as if it neither belonged to himself nor was the expression of his will. Like one of Sarraute's protagonists, Lang is a passive observer, watching as "concepts sometimes shift from one stratum to another" in what is usually a process of increasing alienation—mental contents migrating ever outward, away from a center that shrinks toward a point of nonexistence. Thus, "concepts" from a "self-defense stratum" are often taken over by the more alien "hallucinoid stratum." That the latter stratum itself originates in a centrifuging of the self is obvious from Lang's own description: "The hallucinoid ideological stratum has its origin in the foreign content of the thoughts-out-loud experienced by the writer. That is, it is that part of ideas expressed by the hallucinatory allied phenomenon of minimal, involuntary, subvocal speech which the writer's self classifies as being foreign."<sup>68</sup>

Lang's whole discussion, in fact, closely resembles James's exigent analysis of the self—with its concentration on substantive rather than transitive elements of the stream of experience, its "discovery" of the nonexistence of any inner core, and, finally, its oddly un-self-critical use of self-consciousness (i.e., its acceptance of the products of exigent introspection as discoveries). Thus, in the following passage from Lang, there seems to be a recognition that the sense of externality (what he calls "the hallucinatory factor") is related to the focal awareness of substantialized sensations; this recalls James's "finding" that the self is nothing more than some "bodily process taking place within the head," and it also illustrates the difficulty of knowing whether the objects observed (i.e., the "substantive" sensations) are discovered or created by the observing attitude: "In addition to the verbal productions, a minimal tonus of vocal muscles and a sensation of proprioceptive pressure also are present," writes Lang with regard to his "thoughts-out-loud." "In so far as there is any hallucinatory factor in the experience, the sensation of proprioceptive pressure probably provides it."<sup>69</sup>

We have traced how James was led by his method to deny the reality of the inner and active "citadel within the sanctuary," the "Self of selves"—to conclude that, contrary to what appeared to be the case in casual introspection, "all that is experienced is, strictly considered, *objective*," even including that "imaginary being denoted by the pronoun 'I.'" Lang seems to have been led by a similar process to a form of life in which everything, even "the writer's self" and the "quasinormaloid stratum," seem to exist apart and to be watched from afar. We have seen that Natalija's influencing-machine delusion can be read as an externalization of involution—the lived body turned inside out and contemplated at a remove. In similar fashion, Lang's "strata" can be understood as an externalization of the inner realm of thought—a projection outward of the usually implicit phenomena of inner speech and dialogue. Lang, it seems, does not inhabit his own inner speech—any more than Natalija inhabits her perceptions and bodily sensations. In the apt vocabulary of the philosopher Samuel Alexander, each "contemplates" mental processes that would normally be "enjoyed."<sup>70</sup> And, as we

have seen, such a mode of experience hardly confirms a sense of self; rather than “I think therefore I am,” the formula of existent introspection seems to be “It thinks and therefore I am not.”<sup>71</sup> We see, then, that contrary to the Jasperian “medical-model” assumption (the basis of Schneider’s system of First Rank Symptoms), it is in fact possible, at least to some extent, to “understand” these classically “schizophrenic” symptoms of disturbed selfhood and volition. (Lang might, incidentally, be said to lack sufficient self-criticalness about his own perspective, since his objectification of tendencies of his own consciousness in the form of reified, externalized “strata” indicates a failure to be self-conscious about the effect of his own self-consciousness. In this sense, his position is reminiscent of that which Wittgenstein criticizes in William James.)<sup>72</sup>

It is surely significant that the schizophrenic world is so frequently permeated by a feeling or belief of being watched. Psychoanalysts have often interpreted this as a manifestation of a certain primitive grandiosity and egocentricity, of the infant’s unreflective sense of being at the center of the universe. In fact, however, the patient’s sense of being watched usually involves characteristics that suggest a level of cognitive development well beyond that of the infant or young child.<sup>73</sup>

Thus, during a period when he was emerging from a semicatatonic state, a patient of mine said, “I feel like a man in a cartoon. My thoughts and actions are outside my body, as if in a bubble.” It seems clear enough that this patient was living in a world that was “subjectivized” in some sense of the word. However, his world hardly seems to have had the *kind* of subjectivization that, according to developmental psychologists of virtually all schools, is characteristic of an infant. In the infant’s lived world—at least as psychology has generally understood it—the “subjectivization” involves a *lack* of self-consciousness; presumably, subjective projections not recognized as such by the infant transform the external world into a magical universe largely or completely devoid of any *sense of* subjectivity. But the patient’s complaint that his thoughts and actions felt outside himself suggested that he was self-conscious of his own consciousness. Indeed, he seems to have been taking subjectivity-as-such as his object, thereby transforming “inner” processes into external “things.”

Further, as the following description suggests, the belief or feeling of being watched typically involves a sense of the presence of *other* consciousnesses; this too is quite foreign to any current conception of infantile experience. The passage comes from an autobiographical account of schizophrenia by Thomas Hennell, entitled *The Witnesses*:

I thought that a powerful cine-camera took a photographic record of this scene, for some such instrument was focused on me, and its effects remained for some weeks afterward. At any rate I was in this gallery and in this horrible presence, and my part was the miserable one of a feeble, half-paralyzed victim. . . . A voice whispered: “They have taken a photograph of your mind, *Thomas*.”<sup>74</sup>

Thus, it seems that, in contrast with the traditional view, many schizophrenics are especially prone to taking a distanced stance in which they treat themselves and their experiences as objects of awareness. Needless to say, such manifestations of hypertrophied self-consciousness are not likely to facilitate normal forms of pragmatic and social activity. As one schizophrenic patient complained: “None of my movements come automatically to me now. I’ve been thinking too much about them, even walking properly, talking properly, and smoking—doing anything. Before they would be able to come automatically.”<sup>75</sup>

That the feeling-tone of the schizophrenic world is often devoid of strong affect or desire (though often fraught with a profound, all-encompassing, yet somehow abstract anxiety) seems consistent with their extreme self-consciousness and self-objectification. Jonathan Lang’s chillingly precise and depersonalized descriptions of his inner life evoke a world that could hardly be more different from the traditional Dionysian image. His descriptions of his own psychotic experiences read, in fact, almost like a parody of a scientific monograph—as if this schizophrenic man had a natural predisposition toward the rigorous stance and the academic tone of introspectionist psychology. To be sure, one reason he adopted this exaggeratedly distanced and impersonal tone, with its reliance on the passive voice, may have been its seeming appropriateness to the occasion: Lang’s articles appeared in publications like the *American Journal of Psychiatry*. But it is hard to dismiss the feeling that there is more to it than this—that such a tone is uncannily well suited to the phenomenological reality of this patient’s actual and spontaneous form of experience.

With his image of turning on a light in order to see darkness, James suggested that introspection on the nature of experience might transform experience beyond recognition, thus misleading the introspectionist psychologist into thinking he had come to understand the phenomena in question when, in fact, he had created them. But this was meant to apply to forms of experience that were not *already* pervaded by self-consciousness—where an act of self-monitoring reflection intrudes a *new* element that alters essential qualities of the prereflective lived world. But with patients like Lang or Thomas Hennell, one might say that the light is already on; “distortions” caused by reflection have occurred even before they describe themselves, since pervasive self-consciousness seems, paradoxically enough, to be their natural and spontaneous form of life. Unlike normals, a patient like Jonathan Lang is *already* living in a world of intense introspection—a depersonalized, divided world pervaded by what, following Michel Foucault, we might call an inner “panopticism.” To such a world, already passivized and fragmented, the objectifying stance of introspectionism is curiously appropriate. It is certainly ironic that such a condition should have been taken by the antipsychiatrists as a symbol of liberation into the free play of desire. In fact, the self-objectifying tendency so often associated with schizophrenic loss

of self usually results in a disappearance of desire. Thus, over time Natalija ceased to experience sexual feelings—a development that was reflected in the fact that her influencing machine gradually lost its genitalia.<sup>76</sup> (The power of fixed assumptions is demonstrated by the fact that both Freud and Tausk saw even influencing-machine symbols as “always standing for the dreamer’s own genitals.”<sup>77</sup> This interpretation seems an especially glaring demonstration of Philip Rieff’s observation—that Freud could not conceive of an excess of consciousness.)<sup>78</sup>

We have considered how the reification and rigidity pervading the worlds of both Natalija (with her “influencing machine”) and Lang (with his “strata”) give to their experience a certain stability—that of the chronic phases of psychosis. It is also important to understand how hyperreflexivity can be involved in certain experiences of destruction and chaos characteristic of the more “acute” phases of schizophrenia, for these are even more readily assumed to involve regression of the ego or the ascendancy of the id.

As we have seen, the schizophrenic often seems to be caught in an insoluble dilemma—driven to search for the self yet liable to destroy the self in the act of searching. One patient was afraid of forgetting herself: “When I suddenly realized I hadn’t been thinking about myself I was frightened to death. The unreality feeling came. I must never forget myself for a single instant. I watch the clock and keep busy or I won’t know who I am.”<sup>79</sup> Another patient desperately sought the experiential center of her own consciousness but became confused when she found that, like an infinitely receding horizon, it constantly eluded her attempts to grasp it; she ended by not being able to be sure that the thoughts she had really belonged to her. In the passage below, this patient’s own words allow us almost to watch a “mise en abîme”—a dizzying process in which an intent observing ego undermines the sense of self in the very act of searching for it:

These thoughts go on and on. I’m going over the border. My real self is away down—it used to be just at my throat, but now it’s gone further down. I’m losing myself. It’s getting deeper and deeper. I want to tell you things, but I’m scared. My head’s full of thoughts, fears, hates, jealousies. My head can’t grip them; I can’t hold on to them. I’m behind the bridge of my nose—I mean, my consciousness is there. They’re splitting open my head, oh, that’s schizophrenic, isn’t it? I don’t know whether I have these thoughts or not. I think I just made them up last time in order to get treated.<sup>80</sup>

Paul de Man has described the literary “mise en abîme” as a paradoxical combination of self-constitution and self-cancellation—a process in which, as he says, each “thematic category” is “torn apart by the aporia that constitutes it, thus making the categories effective to the precise extent that they eliminate the value system in which their classification is grounded.”<sup>81</sup> The patient just quoted seems to be trapped in a dilemma that is at least roughly analogous: her desperate attempt to constitute the self is precisely what tears the self apart. Thus, it seems to be the exigent searching itself, the desperate attempt to locate a self as solid as

a thing, that leads to the feeling of having no self, no still point at the center of a turning world.

This experience of dissolution and fragmentation associated with hyper-reflexivity is not restricted to the psychological self. We have already seen that it may affect the bodily self, and now we shall see how it can come also to involve the external world. It is fitting that the next example, the last of this series of phenomenological illustrations, should come from the writings of Antonin Artaud. Artaud was a schizophrenic who, both as artist and as man, had a powerful influence on the imagination of the antirationalist avant-garde in the twentieth century. Indeed, he has been held up as perhaps the supreme example of a Dionysian madness—described by Sylvère Lotringer and Martin Esslin as a sort of Wild Man whose literary productions supposedly display the “uncontrollable, polymorphous movement of desire” or show that “emotion released from all restraint of logic . . . can result in a glorious rhetoric of unbridled passion.”<sup>82</sup> In likening Artaud’s aesthetic project to the “exuberant” self-dissolution he finds in Rimbaud’s *Illuminations* (itself a “triumph of desiring fantasy”), Leo Bersani is very much in this tradition.<sup>83</sup> But Artaud’s own writings suggest the superficiality or, at least, the radical incompleteness of this common portrayal.

The most constant theme of Artaud’s writings is, in fact, what he describes as “an absence of mental fire, a failure of the circulation of life” or “a disembodiment of reality.”<sup>84</sup> Artaud well knew that “there is in me something damaged from an emotional point of view.” “In matters of feeling,” he wrote, “I can’t even find anything that would correspond to feelings.” It in no way diminishes the brilliance of his writings to suggest that the sensual excesses of his “theater of cruelty” may be better understood not as expressions of a naturally overflowing vitality but as defenses *against* the devitalization and derealization that he felt to be the central fact of his existence. Indeed, Artaud himself tells us as much: “I wanted a theatre that would be like a shock treatment, galvanize, shock people into feeling.”<sup>85</sup> In another passage, this author who would have liked to identify with the murderous sensualist of his imagination, the emperor Heliogabalus, speaks of “the unprecedented number of crimes whose perverse gratuitousness is explained only by our powerlessness to take complete possession of life.”<sup>86</sup> (There may be an analogy here to the acts of self-mutilation that hospitalized schizophrenics sometimes commit in order to regain a feeling of their own physical existence.)

It is true, of course, that Artaud yearned for an eclipse of the mind in favor of ecstatic oneness with his body and fusion with the ambient world. It seems, however, that far from being his primordial condition, this was an escape he never achieved—not through drugs, the theater of cruelty, nor even his own quest for the primitive, the famous voyage to the land of the Tarahumara Indians of Mexico. Indeed, one might say that his persistent misery, and the most powerful motivation for the extreme antimentalism of his aesthetics, lay in the fact that the loss of self he actually experienced—he called it a “constant leakage of the normal

level of reality,” a “fundamental slackening of my being” or “dispossession of my vital substance”—was more cerebral in character, closer, in fact, to the “mise en abîme” of self-alienating introspection. “We are of the inside of the mind, of the interior of the head,” he wrote. “I suffer because the Mind is not in life and life is not the Mind; I suffer from the Mind as organ, the Mind as interpreter, the Mind as intimidator of things to force them to enter the Mind.” Thus, in 1925 Artaud wrote of a physical state “presenting to the brain only images of limbs that are threadlike and woolly, images of limbs that are far away and not where they should be.” “I am the witness, I am the only witness of myself,” he wrote the same year when describing the “pitfalls” and “furtive abductions” of his thought processes. This vitiation of the sense of controlled mental activity and of bodily self-presence seems throughout his life to have been accompanied by a disturbing self-consciousness. A dozen years later, shortly after the disillusionment of the voyage to the Tarahumara, he speaks of “this dislocated assemblage . . . this ill-assembled heap of organs which I was *and which I had the impression of witnessing* like a vast landscape on the point of breaking up” (emphasis added).

Such an extreme loss of self is not, however, likely to occur in total isolation from the patient’s experience of the rest of the world. In fact, it is common in schizophrenia for profound disturbances of self-experience to be accompanied by a well-recognized symptom called the “World Catastrophe” delusion, an awesomely disconcerting experience in which the very being of the universe seems to be undermined or even destroyed. Psychoanalytic theorists have seen this World Catastrophe as a manifestation of an extreme primitivization, of profound regression to a stage that precedes any consciousness of distinction, and thus of any feeling of the existence either of the self or of the external world. In such a “primitive” state, awareness of self as a constituting subjectivity would, presumably, be absent or severely attenuated (as is also true of the condition of desublimated, pre-Oedipal desire imagined by Bersani, a point that Bersani explicitly makes). But what is striking in the following passage by Artaud—perhaps the best evocation of schizophrenic World Catastrophe ever written—is precisely the fact that awareness of self-as-representing-consciousness is not attenuated but exaggerated. Artaud’s reference to the “rootlets . . . trembling at the corners of my mind’s eye” demands to be read as a kind of literalized or concretized description of his own being-as-perceiving-mind; an awareness of his own ongoing subjectivity seems, in the form of this strange ontological hybrid somewhere between consciousness and thing (the “rootlets”), actually to enter its own field of awareness. What occurs here is, then, hardly a lowering of the psychic level to some stuporous or unreflexive condition; rather, it seems to involve a too acute awareness of the process of experiencing. As we saw above through the example of Sorrentino’s fiction, such an awareness tends to bring along with it an accompanying feeling of the world’s fragile dependence on the consciousness by which it is constituted. (Notice with regard to this point how Artaud talks of the “mental

padding” of space, and of feeling that the “mass” of space heaves as he shifts his eye.) In short, what occurs here is a hyperreflexive rendering explicit of what would usually be the unseen but taken-for-granted foundation of experience; this brings on the destruction and disappearance both of self-as-subject *and* of the external world. (Thus, along with the trembling of the mind’s eye, there is a heaving and trembling of space—followed by the nothingness implied in the homogeneous images of objectless darkness and of “total frost.”)

Yes, space was yielding its whole mental padding in which no thought was yet clear or had replenished its load of objects. But little by little the mass turned like a slimy and powerful nausea, a sort of vast influx of blood, vegetal and thundering. And the rootlets which were trembling at the corners of my mind’s eye detached themselves with vertiginous speed from the wind-contracted mass. And all space trembled like a vagina being pillaged by the globe of the burning sky. And something like the beak of a real dove pierced the confused mass of states, all profound thinking at the moment formed layers, resolved itself, became transparent and reduced. . . . And two or three times more the whole vegetable mass heaved, and each time my eye shifted to a more precise position. The very darkness became profuse and without object. The total frost gained clarity.

### Conclusion

Perhaps the most fundamental premise of psychoanalysis is the notion that all forms of psychopathology can in their essence be understood as manifestations of relative “primitivity”—as lower stages on a sort of developmental Great Chain of Being of advancement toward the goals of self-monitoring and self-control of thought, action, and the passions. But we have seen that certain central features of one of the most important and severe forms of psychopathology, the loss of self in schizophreniform psychosis, seems to be embedded in modes of consciousness that are hardly primitive—modes that, in fact, have much in common with the hypertrophied reflexivity characteristic of certain strains of the modernist and postmodernist sensibility. To admit this is to call into question the rather monolithic psychoanalytic conceptions of psychopathology and to suggest the necessity of considering quite different models.

We are used to thinking of psychosis as the antithesis of rational thought and conscious control and thus as necessarily involving what Pierre Janet called “a lowering of the psychic level.” Indeed, it sometimes seems as if we were unable to break out of Western thought’s enduring opposition between reason and passion—as if, like enchanted victims of Plato’s famous metaphor, we were unable to imagine madness except as a case of the dark horse of instinct overwhelming the charioteer’s ability to be in control. But if, as I have argued, there are forms of psychosis that derive not from a *lowering* but from a *hypertrophy* of consciousness, what we need is a psychopathology capable of tracing the consequences of patho-

logical self-scrutiny, of grasping the warning about “interiorization” that Nietzsche, the avatar of modernism, once gave: “One *must* not eye oneself while having an experience; else the eye becomes ‘an evil eye.’”<sup>87</sup> What we need might be termed a post-Nietzschean psychopathology—for it would be capable of understanding hyperreflexive forms of madness, of recognizing, as did Nietzsche, that it is possible for “our knowledge [to] take its revenge on us, just as ignorance exacted its revenge in the Middle Ages.”<sup>88</sup> That psychoanalysis should have been so largely blind to these forms of psychopathology is, perhaps, not so surprising. For, whatever its merits, psychoanalysis itself is also an expression of that tendency we have been studying—the desire for absolute self-consciousness that, in the words of Foucault, Nietzsche’s disciple, imbues the whole of modern thought with “the necessity of thinking the unthought,” with that interminable, self-transforming, and often self-defeating tendency by which man attempts to illuminate all the backgrounds or horizons of his own experience, and thus to drag all of his being out into the bright light of the *cogito*.<sup>89</sup>

To accept the role of hyperreflexivity in schizoid and schizophrenic states would not, of course, be to see such conditions as purely volitional—as if they were simply perverse strategies engaged in willfully; rather, it would explode certain received distinctions—by recognizing, for example, that it is both true and not true that such patients lack awareness of and control over themselves. For, what patients like those we have been considering cannot seem to control is self-control itself; what they cannot get distance from is their own endless need for distancing; what they cannot be conscious of is their own hypertrophied self-consciousness and its effect on their world. The patient Thomas Hennell understood these paradoxes: “The introverted mind believes itself busy, yet produces nothing,” he wrote in *The Witnesses*. “Its self-torture is partly involuntary, but partly willful: for that which ambitiously directs it increases its painful labor.”<sup>90</sup>

Such a reading of the lived world of schizophrenia also casts a new light on the “*praecox* feeling”—that sense of the schizophrenic patient’s essential strangeness so emphasized by Jaspers. It suggests that what is alienating to the external observer about such patients is not *just* the patient’s sheer differentness. Encountering such a patient is *not*, for example, like encountering someone from a radically different culture or who is in just any highly different state or stage of consciousness—as with, say, a delirious alcoholic, a euphoric manic, or a young child. In these instances, any sense of alienness the observer might feel would result primarily from the fact that the people encountering each other have little in common. But it seems that what is alienating to the observer about schizophrenics like Natalija and Jonathan Lang cannot be separated from the alienation felt within the worlds of the patients themselves. If this is so, it has at least one rather odd implication. It suggests that the observer’s alienation may not, in fact, indicate a total failure of empathy; it may be a *shared* alienation—a feeling evoked

by an accurate intuition of what the patient is actually going through. Could it be, then, that the dizzying abyss we feel in the presence of certain schizophrenic patients is related to the “mise en abîme” into which the patients themselves are falling?

## Notes

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1. Claude Lévi-Strauss, “The Archaic Illusion,” in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (Boston, 1969), 94–95; Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value* (Chicago, 1980), 55.
2. A schizophrenic patient quoted in Julian Jaynes, *The Origins of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (Boston, 1976), 425.
3. Clifford Geertz, *Local Knowledge* (New York, 1983), 59.
4. Fredric Jameson, “Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan,” in Shoshana Felman, ed., *Literature and Psychoanalysis* (Baltimore, 1982), 382.
5. Jean Broustra, quoted in J. H. Matthews, *Surrealism, Insanity and Poetry* (Syracuse, N. Y., 1982), 4–5.
6. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York, 1967), 21, 36–37, 40–41.
7. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York, 1968), 267.
8. Leo Bersani, *A Future for Astyanax* (New York, 1984), xi, xii, 5–9, 234–36, 255–60, and passim. Bersani describes “attempts to simplify character to desublimated, discontinuous scenes of the desiring imagination” (263).
9. E.g., Bersani asserts that “all serious enterprises of psychic deconstruction” involve “the pornographic tyrannies intrinsic to all desire”; *ibid.*, 272 (emphasis added).
10. Perhaps even more than most psychiatric diagnoses, that of schizophrenia is ambiguous and controversial, and there are no universally accepted criteria for its application. The adequacy of Schneider’s First Rank Symptoms (discussed below) as diagnostic criteria has been questioned, as have both the traditional criteria offered in the classic works by Emil Kraepelin and Eugen Bleuler and the definition recently instituted by the American Psychiatric Association in *DSM III: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, 3rd ed. (Washington, D.C., 1980). Further, each of these conceptions of “schizophrenia” is probably best thought of not as offering a category with a single or unambiguous essential feature, but rather as a “family concept” with fuzzy boundaries (and, probably, a certain culture boundedness). However, there can be little doubt of the existence of patients who do manifest the syndrome Schneider and Jaspers have described, with its profound distortions of normal self-world boundaries. In this paper, I will use the term *schizophrenia* to refer to such patients. Since some of these also display certain “affective” symptoms or do not manifest the full “schizophrenic” syndrome as described in the most recent official American diagnostic system (*DSM III*), some of them would be called “schizoaffective” or “schizophreniform” by that system.

11. Patients quoted in Thomas Freeman, John Cameron, and Andrew McGhie, *Chronic Schizophrenia* (New York, 1973), 54; Eugene Meyer and Lino Covi, "The Experience of Depersonalization: A Written Report by a Patient," *Psychiatry* 23 (1960): 215; and Alberta Szalita, "Regression and Perception in Psychotic States," *Psychiatry* 21 (1958): 56.
12. Quoted in Marguerite Sechehaye, *A New Psychotherapy in Schizophrenia* (New York, 1956), 149.
13. Karl Jaspers, *General Psychopathology* (Chicago, 1963), 577–82.
14. Manfred Bleuler, *The Schizophrenic Disorders* (New Haven, 1978), 15.
15. Kurt Schneider, *Clinical Psychopathology* (New York, 1959), 88–145.
16. *DSM III*, 182, 183, 188.
17. Anna Freud, preface to Freeman, *Chronic Schizophrenia*, vii–viii.
18. Freeman, *Chronic Schizophrenia*, 103.
19. According to a recent review article, "Most writers maintain that in regression, states of mind more primitive chronologically and developmentally gain ascendancy and that these states resemble, in structure and function, those postulated to be operative during infancy and early childhood." Thomas McGlashan, "Intensive Individual Psychotherapy of Schizophrenia," *Archives of General Psychiatry* 40 (1983): 911.
20. Victor Tausk, "On the Origin of the Influencing Machine in Schizophrenia" (1919), *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 2 (1933): 529–30.
21. "She senses all manipulations performed on the corresponding part of her own body and in the same manner. All effects and changes undergone by the apparatus take place simultaneously in the patient's body and *vice versa*." *Ibid.*, 532.
22. *Ibid.*, 549. Other examples of the influencing-machine delusion are described in Paul Schilder, *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body* (New York, 1950), 223; and Freeman, *Chronic Schizophrenia*, 64–65.
23. Tausk, "On the Origin of the Influencing Machine," 536.
24. Sandor Ferenczi and Otto Rank, *The Development of Psychoanalysis* (New York, 1925), 31.
25. Thomas Freeman, *Psychopathology of the Psychoses* (New York, 1969), 137, 163. For other examples of primitivity interpretations, see Sandor Ferenczi, *Sex in Psychoanalysis* (Boston, 1916), 219–31; Otto Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis* (New York, 1945), 421, 423, and 46–51 (re passivity, awareness of bodily sensations, and grandiosity as regressive phenomena); also see the major works of Heinz Kohut and Otto Kernberg.
26. James Masterson, *The Narcissistic and Borderline Disorders* (New York, 1981), 187.
27. A third major school of thought, that of behaviorism (and the more recent variant, "cognitive behaviorism"), has had somewhat less influence on the understanding of schizophrenia and will not be discussed in this essay.
28. The "medical-model" approach, both currently and throughout the twentieth century, has generally accepted the idea that certain details of the *content* of a patient's delusions or hallucinations may be comprehensible as related to past or present circumstances. However, the more important *formal* characteristics—these would certainly include the distortions of selfhood and volition implicit in Schneider's First Rank Symptoms, as well as certain distortions of logical thinking and of the experience of time and space—are assumed to be functions of a schizophrenic process whose genesis is essentially physiological. Consequently, these essential characteristics have been assumed to be, in Jaspers's terms, candidates for "Erklären" but not for "Verstehen." In contrast, I will be arguing that this equation of the distinctions of form-

versus-content and of explanation-versus-understanding does not really hold: as we shall see, *formal* aspects of consciousness, such as those listed by Schneider, can, at least to some extent, be “understood.”

Incidentally, to claim, as I shall, that schizophreniform consciousness can be understood is not, of course, to deny that physiological factors might play a role in the etiology or maintenance of the schizophrenic condition. Phenomenological interpretation and physical explanation are different perspectives, not mutually contradictory ones. However, this is not the place to theorize about possible interrelationships between the physiological and the phenomenological realms, for this would necessarily be both a very time-consuming and a highly speculative enterprise. (Indeed, one is tempted to say that asking for an answer to this question is tantamount to asking for a solution to the mind-body problem.)

29. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations* (Berkeley, 1967), 43.
30. Anna Freud, preface to Freeman, *Chronic Schizophrenia*, viii.
31. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago, 1966), 42. My argument in this essay has something in common with Lévi-Strauss’s famous critique of traditional notions of the “savage” and his demonstration of deep structural affinities between sophisticated and so-called “primitive” thought.
32. Sechehaye, *A New Psychotherapy*, 155.
33. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York, 1977), 87–88. Also see Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death* (New York, 1959), and *Love’s Body* (New York, 1966); and R. D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience* (New York, 1967).
34. Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 2, *Mythical Thought* (New Haven, 1955), 13.

To a great extent, interpretations of schizophrenia seem to have followed a general pattern for conceptualizing Otherness, which has been described by Stephen Greenblatt as follows: “The alien is perceived by the authority either as that which is unformed or chaotic (the absence of order) or that which is false or negative (the demonic parody of order). Since accounts of the former tend inevitably to organize and thematize it, the chaotic slides into the demonic, and consequently the alien is always constructed as the distorted image of the authority”; *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago, 1980), 9. Thus, medical-model interpretations often treat schizophrenia as the chaotic, the absence of order. As we saw, this amounted in Jaspers’s case to a refusal to interpret or thematize the illness. The antipsychiatrists, on the other hand, have largely construed schizophrenia as the demonic, in the form of the Dionysian—that is, as the antithesis of the stifling order of normalcy. Psychoanalytic primitivity interpretations can be seen as combining these two approaches. On the one hand, the ascendancy of id over ego, or of primary process over secondary process, suggests the triumph of all that is dark and demonic. On the other hand, the supposed infantilism of the schizophrenic’s ego suggests that the essential feature is the lack of a mature ordering and categorization of the experiential world. In a way, of course, the psychoanalytic also domesticates or denies the Otherness of the madman, for it views his seeming differentness as but the manifestation of an earlier stage of the Same.

35. William James, “The Consciousness of Self,” in *The Principles of Psychology*, vol. 1 (New York, 1890), 291–401; passages quoted below are on pp. 297, 298, 300, 301, 304, 305.
36. On Titchener, see J. P. Chaplin and T. S. Krawiec, *Systems and Theories of Psychology* (New York, 1968), 88–90. As James was well aware, his argument was also similar to

that of associationistic and empiricist philosophers like Hume and Johann Friedrich Herbart.

37. William James, "The Stream of Thought," in *The Principles of Psychology*. Also see his reservations expressed on pp. 183–98 and 336ff. of the *Principles*.
38. See P. M. S. Hacker's excellent discussion of Wittgenstein in *Insight and Illusion* (Oxford, 1972), 126–27.
39. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books* (Oxford, 1958), 66.
40. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford, 1953), 124–25.
41. *Ibid.*, 125.
42. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel* (Berkeley, 1970), 103.
43. It is obvious, I hope, that I am not arguing in favor of *either* the traditional humanist notion *or* the nonself doctrine that some postmodernists now defend. The implication is, rather, that each vision may have equal, though limited, validity, since each can find itself to be "true" in its own context (that is, e.g., the contexts I have called "casual" and "exigent" introspection). From a Wittgensteinian point of view, it would be no less "metaphysical" (in the pejorative sense) to believe in the decentered subject than in its opposite, the Cartesian *cogito* and the myth of presence. It seems ironic, therefore, that some followers of poststructuralism should proclaim the end of metaphysics at the same time as they espouse a doctrine that can only be considered metaphysical.
44. Compare James's analysis to that of Ernst Mach, who believed that the individual was only "a relatively stable complex of sensational elements." For discussions of Mach, see Wylie Sypher, *The Loss of Self in Modern Literature and Art* (New York, 1962); and David Luft, *Robert Musil and the Crisis of European Culture, 1880–1942* (Berkeley, 1980), 82–88.
45. Nathalie Sarraute, *The Age of Suspicion* (New York, 1963), 57.
46. *Ibid.*, 16–17.
47. Nathalie Sarraute, *Between Life and Death* (New York, 1969), 63–64.
48. One might contrast these developments with those discussed by Lionel Trilling in *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971). Trilling traces the genealogy of a type of disintegrated, alienated self to Hegel's ideas about the intrinsic development of Spirit. He shows how, in the eighteenth century, the ideals of "integral selfhood" and "simple placid consciousness" came to be seen as representing an *undeveloped* condition in which spirit was not yet aware of the arbitrariness of social role and therefore could not yet experience alienation from that role. The examples of disintegrated selfhood I am considering seem to occur at a level that is more central and profound; they involve not alienation from social role, not a true self versus false self distinction, but alienation from one's own consciousness. Instead of insincerity and inconsistency (as in Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew*, Trilling's primary example), what seems to occur in these cases is fragmentation and dissolution of the "inner man" himself.
49. Paul Valéry, *Cahiers* (Paris, 1973), 295–96.
50. Quoted in Sypher, *Loss of Self*, 90.
51. Quoted in Linda Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* (New York, 1984), 87.
52. Bersani, *Future for Astyanax*, 236, 272.
53. These trends correspond closely to those distinguished by Hugo von Hoffmansthal in 1893, well before the rhetoric of the decentered self had become entrenched: "Today two things seem to be modern: the analysis of life and the flight from life. . . . One practises anatomy on the inner life of one's mind, or one dreams. Reflection or fantasy, mirror image or dream image. . . . Modern is the dissection of a mood, a sigh, a

- scruple; and modern is the instinctive, almost somnambulistic surrender to every revelation of beauty, to a harmony of colours, to a glittering metaphor, to a wondrous allegory"; quoted in James McFarlane, "The Mind of Modernism," in Malcolm Bradbury and McFarlane, eds., *Modernism: 1890–1930* (Harmondsworth, Eng., 1976), 71–94. For an example of what might be considered a partial synthesis of these two impulses (by means of a kind of eroticized introversion), see the discussion of William Gass's metafiction in Hutcheon, *Narcissistic Narrative*, 86.
54. In a discussion of Rimbaud's *Illuminations*, for example, Bersani points out that the loss of self is not total in this work since complete fusion or fragmentation is prevented by the appearance of the narrator as an *element* in many of the scenic "illuminations" (though, as Bersani emphasizes, awareness of the narrator as a distinct, constituting *subjectivity* or *subject* of desire is absent). And, says Bersani, by so interrupting the dominant impulse of the work, the narrator "thereby saves himself from a *schizophrenic* failure to distinguish *at all* between the self and the alien forms into which it has been projected"; Bersani, *Future for Astyanax*, 245 (emphasis added). As we shall see, however, awareness of self-as-subject may actually be heightened in schizophrenia.
  55. Quoted in Carney Landis, ed., *Varieties of Psychopathological Experience* (New York, 1964), 193. Also see "The Case of Peter," in R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self* (Harmondsworth, Eng., 1965), 120–36.
  56. For other relevant descriptions, see Herbert Rosenfeld, *Psychotic States* (London, 1965), 13–33, 155–68; and Thomas Szasz, "The Psychology of Bodily Feelings in Schizophrenia," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 19 (1957): 11–16.
  57. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London, 1962), xiii.
  58. Patients quoted in James Chapman, "The Early Symptoms of Schizophrenia," *British Journal of Psychiatry* 112 (1966): 232.
  59. Freeman, *Chronic Schizophrenia*, 95.
  60. Freeman, et al., write that "we assume an egocentrism in which there is no differentiation between ego and external world, and therefore no capacity for reflective thinking through which the subject could comprehend his own symbolism"; *ibid.*, 84.
  61. See, e.g., Charles Donnelly, "The Observing Self and the Development of Cohesiveness," *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 52 (1979): 277–79.
  62. See, e.g., cognitive-developmental interpretations like that offered in Heinz Werner and Bernard Kaplan, *Symbol Formation* (New York, 1963). Although some psychoanalytic writers have criticized certain of the more extreme and monolithic implications of the primitivity model, they have not questioned the fundamental equation of pathology with immaturity; e.g., J. E. Gedo and A. Goldberg, *Models of the Mind* (Chicago, 1973). Even those analysts who emphasize the active, defensive aspect of schizophrenic processes accept the regression model. Thus, according to Silvano Arieti's notion of "teleologic regression," lapsing into schizophrenic modes of thought serves a purpose—escape from threatening mental contents; *Interpretation of Schizophrenia*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1974). But he too understands the form of schizophrenic consciousness as primitive. Harold Searles, *Collected Papers on Schizophrenia* (New York, 1965), presents a similar position.
  63. Jaynes, *Origins of Consciousness*, 84–85, 404–32. Also see Sheldon Bach, "On the Narcissistic State of Consciousness," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 58 (1977): 213, who argues that the "narcissistic" state of consciousness should be compared to that of ancient man as described by E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, 1951); and Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of Mind*, trans. T. G. Rosenmeyer (Cambridge, Mass., 1953). Szalita, "Regression and Perception," 58, makes a similar argument.

64. Jaynes, *Origins of Consciousness*, 95–96, 426–27, and passim.
65. See discussion in Max Hamilton, ed., *Fish's Schizophrenia* (Bristol, Eng., 1976), 92–95, 140, 157.
66. Jonathan Lang, “The Other Side of Hallucinations,” *American Journal of Psychiatry* 94 (1938): 1091.
67. *Ibid.*, 1091–92.
68. Jonathan Lang, “The Other Side of the Ideological Aspects of Schizophrenia,” *Psychiatry* 3 (1940): 389–93.
69. Lang, “Other Side of Hallucinations,” 1091.
70. Samuel Alexander, among other philosophers, has argued that acts of consciousness cannot be contemplated—that to think of them in this way is to mistakenly assimilate these processes to the things that are their objects; see John Passmore, *A Hundred Years of Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1968), 267–69. But the example of schizophrenics like Lang and Natalija demonstrates that such “contemplation” is possible, though it may not be normal. For, in their experience, the implicit and transparent phenomena that would normally lie close to the subject pole of the intentional arc of consciousness have, as it were, migrated out to the endpoint of this arc, there to turn opaque. It is true, of course, that there must then be *another* act of consciousness that is more invisible and implicit, an “enjoyed” act which, as it were, “contemplates” the acts that have been rendered explicit. In this sense, Alexander’s claims about an act of consciousness necessarily remaining implicit seem to hold true. It is interesting, however, that the contemplated act will sometimes mimic the implicit or enjoyed one; the contemplated process will often be itself a manifestation of self-consciousness. Thus, for example, some schizophrenic patients may hear voices that express their self-consciousness. (Schreber, the famous paranoid schizophrenic written about by Freud, frequently heard voices saying “What are you thinking of now?”) In such instances, we are faced with a situation reminiscent of the “mise en abîme” so often discovered by deconstructionist readings of works of literature as infinitely reflexive artifacts. Here, as in those readings, the ultimate meaning of the “text” seems to be the expression of its own reflexivity. (One schizoid young man, a visual artist, said that if he stared long enough at any painting, he realized that the canvas was like an eye that watched, while the frame was like ears. He seemed, as it were, to see seeing.)
71. Phrasing borrowed from Erich Heller’s discussion of Kafka in *The Disinherited Mind* (New York, 1975), 202.
72. It should be noted, however, that Wittgenstein’s critique concentrates on the reifications inherent in explicitly held “metaphysical” beliefs; my primary concern in this paper is, rather, with the reifications inherent in a certain kind of lived world. In some cases, like that of Jonathan Lang, such a mode of experience may also be explicitly articulated as a psychological or philosophical description. (In more than a few cases, in fact, a patient’s “delusions” can be read as just such a description.) In other cases, however, the mode of experience remains on a more prereflective level.
73. It may, incidentally, be of significance that schizophrenia generally does not have its onset before adolescence, the stage of “formal operations” when the capacity to think about thinking is acquired. If the schizophrenic can be called “egocentric,” then surely it is the “higher” egocentricity of the adolescent, which involves an overvaluation of thought. See Barbel Inhelder and Jean Piaget, *The Growth of Logical Thinking* (New York, 1958), chap. 18.
74. Thomas Hennell, *The Witnesses* (New Hyde Park, N.Y., 1967), 123–24.
75. Quoted in Chapman, “Early Symptoms,” 239. Perhaps in this way we can understand

why such patients sometimes find it easier to describe their experiences if they use the third rather than the first person. "It would be easier if we talked of a notional third person," said one. "I could more easily understand if we described this illness on a third person. Then I could understand it. I can't understand it if it is applied to myself" (228).

76. "At an earlier stage, sexual sensations were produced in her through manipulation of the genitalia of the machine; but now the machine no longer possesses any genitalia, though why or how they disappeared she cannot tell. Ever since the machine lost its genitalia, the patient has ceased to experience sexual sensations"; Tausk, "On the Origin of the Influencing Machine," 530.
77. *Ibid.*, 528, 534, 554–55.
78. Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralizer* (Chicago, 1979), 321.  
 In the view of some psychoanalysts, the flattened emotionality of the schizophrenic is to be explained as an indirect consequence of the id-dominated nature of the illness, since it supposedly involves an emotional shutting down in response to fear of overwhelming, primitive emotion; see McGlashan, "Intensive Individual Psychotherapy," 914; also, see Tausk, "On the Origin of the Influencing Machine," 549–50. The evidence for this contention is ambiguous to say the least. However, even if such a defensive configuration were characteristic of such patients, it would hardly detract from the importance of studying the hyperreflexive aspects; for these seem, in any case, to have taken on an independent life of their own and to have given their stamp to the experience and the expression of the illness.
79. Laing, *Divided Self*, 109.
80. *Ibid.*, 151.
81. Quoted in Frank Lentricchia, *After the New Criticism* (Chicago, 1980), 179.
82. Sylvère Lotringer, "Libido Unbound: The Politics of 'Schizophrenia,'" in "Anti-Oedipus," *Semiotexte* 2, no. 3 (1977): 8–10; Martin Esslin, *Antonin Artaud* (Harmondsworth, Eng., 1976), 122–27.
83. Bersani, *Future for Astyanax*, 236.
84. All quotations from Artaud not otherwise noted are in *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, ed. Susan Sontag (New York, 1976), 59, 60–62, 65, 75, 82, 103, 195, 294, 382–83.
85. Quoted in Esslin, *Artaud*, 37.
86. Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double* (New York, 1958), 9.
87. Quoted in Walter Kaufman, ed., *The Portable Nietzsche* (Middlesex, Eng., 1977), 517.
88. Quoted in Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche* (South Bend, Ind., 1975), 241. In *The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche describes the form of illness that can result from a burgeoning of reflective consciousness and an unhinging from the guidance of unconscious drives: "They were forced to think, deduce, calculate, weigh cause and effect—unhappy people, reduced to their weakest, most fallible organ, their consciousness! . . . This is what I call man's interiorization; it alone provides the soil for the growth of what is later called man's *soul*. Man's interior world, originally meager and tenuous, was expanding in every dimension, in proportion as the outward discharge of his feelings was curtailed. . . . Lacking external enemies and resistances, and confined within an oppressive narrowness and regularity, man began rending, persecuting, terrifying himself . . . his sickness of himself, brought on by the violent severance from his animal past"; *The Birth of Tragedy and the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. G. Golffing (Garden City, N.Y., 1956), 217–18.
89. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York, 1973), 327.
90. Hennell, *The Witnesses*, 210.