The Self and Others

Further studies in sanity and madness

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For Anne

Preface

THIS BOOK attempts to depict the own person within a social system or 'nexus' of other persons; it attempts to understand the way in which the others affect his experience of himself and of them, and how, accordingly, his actions take shape.

The others either can contribute to the person's self-fulfilment, or they can be a potent factor in his losing himself (alienation) even to the point of madness.

The reader should remember, however, that I am not saying that other people *cause* madness, any more than a high hill can be the cause of heart failure in a sufferer from rheumatic heart disease. No aetiological theory of madness that I subscribe to is stated in this book.

The work which is the soil of this book is research on interactional processes, particularly in marriages and families, with particular but not exclusive reference to psychosis, based on the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations and the Tavistock Clinic. I wish to thank these organizations for facilitating the work in all its aspects.

The latter stages in the preparation of the manuscript were greatly helped by a Fellowship from the Foundations Fund for Research in Psychiatry, which I gratefully acknowledge.

The book owes a great deal to many sources which are, for the most part, little discussed in the text itself – psycho-analysis, particularly the work of Fairbairn, Melanie Klein, Bion, Winnicott, Rycroft, Erikson, Marion Milner; analytical psychology; and American research in communication, person perception, and family process.

Over the past two years much of this book has been discussed by colleagues and friends. I should like to thank in particular Dr. Karl Abenheimer, Mr. J. A. Ambrose, Dr. John Bowlby, Dr.

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London, June 1961

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'The way out is via the door. Why is it that no one will use this method?'

CONFUCIUS

PART ONE

Modes of Interpersonal Experience

CHAPTER I

The phenomena of phantasy

No one doubts that one acts and experiences oneself and others 'in imagination' and 'in reality'. Psycho-analysis adds to what is usually termed 'imagination' and 'reality' a third mode of experience, which is termed 'unconscious experience' or 'phantasy'.

It is not necessary to prove the existence of 'imagination' or of 'reality': it is not possible to prove the existence of 'phantasy' to the person who is immersed in it. Phantasy can only be directly known through and after the person's own emergence from it.

Unfortunately, phantasy has not received the consideration it demands from an existential and phenomenological perspective. However, no adequate existential account of the relation of self and other can afford to ignore phantasy.

A paper[1] by Susan Isaacs (1952) on 'The nature and function of phantasy' provides a convenient starting-point. We choose to begin with this psycho-analytic view of phantasy, because we wish to endorse, with Isaacs, the need to recognize phantasy as a *mode of experience*. Human actions are barely comprehensible without an understanding of the phantasies in terms of which persons experience and relate to each other. Psycho-analysis and analytical psychology have demonstrated this very clearly. Nevertheless, the phenomenology of phantasy remains largely confused.

[1] This paper has become something of a classic in certain circles. It has been generally accepted by Melanie Klein and her associates as a basic statement of their common positions. It has also been radically attacked (Glover, 1945).

In the following pages we shall try to show where the confusion lies, and to suggest some remedies for certain dilemmas of theory.

I

Isaacs states that she is 'mostly concerned with the definition of "phantasy"; that is to say, with describing the *series of facts* which the use of the term helps us to identify, to organize and to relate to other significant series of facts' (p. 67).

She summarizes her argument as follows:

1. 'The concept of phantasy has gradually widened in psychoanalytic thought. It now requires clarification and explicit expansion in order to integrate all the relevant facts.
2. On the views here developed:

   (a) Phantasies are the primary content of unconscious mental processes.

   (b) Unconscious phantasies are primarily about bodies, and represent instinctual aims towards objects.

   (c) These phantasies are, in the first instance, the psychic representatives of libidinal and destructive instincts. Early in development they also become elaborated into defences, as well as wish-fulfilments and anxiety-contents.

   (d) Freud's postulated "hallucinatory wish-fulfilment" and his "primary identification", "introjection", and "projection" are the basis of the phantasy-life.

   (e) Through external experience, phantasies become elaborated and capable of expression, but they do not depend upon such experience for their existence.

   (f) Phantasies are not dependent upon words, although they may under certain conditions be capable of expression in words.

   (g) The earliest phantasies are experienced in sensations: later, they take the form of plastic images and dramatic representations.

(h) Phantasies have both psychic and bodily effects, e.g. in conversion symptoms, bodily qualities, character and personality, neurotic symptoms, inhibitions and sublimations.

(i) Unconscious phantasies form the operative link between instincts and mechanism. When studied in detail, every variety of ego-mechanism can be seen to arise from specific sorts of phantasy, which in the last resort have their origin in instinctual impulses. "The ego is a differentiated part of the id." A "mechanism" is an abstract general term describing certain mental processes which are experienced by the subject as unconscious phantasies.

(j) Adaptation to reality and reality-thinking require the support of concurrent unconscious phantasies. Observation of the ways in which knowledge of the external world develops shows how the child's phantasy contributes to his learning.

(k) Unconscious phantasies exert a continuous influence throughout life, both in normal and neurotic people, the differences lying in the specific character of the dominant phantasies, the desire or anxiety associated with them and their interplay with each other and with external reality' (pp. 111–12).

Let us consider Isaacs's position in this passage, and elsewhere in her paper, in some detail.

The predominant position from which Isaacs sets out to describe that series of facts, which in her view the use of the term phantasy helps her 'to identify, to organize and to relate to other significant series of facts', is that of the 'own person' in relation to the 'other'. The paper is written by *p*, from the perspective of *p*, about the phantasies of *o*.

From this perspective, the only 'facts' directly available to *p* are the actions of *o*, as experienced by *p*. The assumption is then made (and I shall not question at present the validity of this assumption) that *o*'s actions are largely a function of *o*'s experience.

From the perspective of *p* seeing *o*, Isaacs, as *p*, infers from her experience of *o*'s actions certain things about *o*'s experience.

With a baby, the adult, *p*, infers what the baby, *o*, may be experiencing. *P* infers from *o*'s behaviour that *o*'s experience of a situation common to *p* and *o* is the same as or is different from his (*p*'s) experience of the 'same' situation.

Isaacs states: 'Our views about phantasy in these earliest years are based almost wholly upon inference, but then this is true at any age. Unconscious phantasies are always inferred, not observed as such; the technique of psycho-analysis as a whole is largely based upon inferred knowledge' (p. 69).

To be consistent, she would require to maintain that *p*'s knowledge about *o*'s phantasies is based at any age of *p* or *o entirely* upon inference, as she states firmly in the second sentence above. Since to Isaacs phantasies are 'inner', 'mental' events, *p*'s phantasies are directly available only to *p*, although they can be inferred by *o* and vice versa. The idea that 'the mind', 'the unconscious', or 'phantasy' is located inside a person, and, *in that sense*, is inaccessible to the other, has far-reaching effects on the whole of psychoanalytic theory and method.

Isaacs, in referring not simply to imagination, day-dreams, or reveries, but to 'unconscious phantasy', is inferring from her position as *p* something about *o* of which *o* himself is unaware. Or, to use another formula, she is stating that there is a level of *o*'s awareness of which *o* knows, or may know, nothing. Therefore, in terms of her own premises, direct corroboration of her (*p*'s) inference, by explicit testimony from *o*, is not necessary to confirm this particular inference.

When *p* is the analyst and *o* the analysand, *p* states:

> 'The personality, the attitudes and intentions, even the external characteristics and the sex of the analyst, *as seen and felt in the patient's mind*, change from day to day (even from moment to moment), according to changes in the inner life of the patient (whether these are brought about by the analyst's

comments or by outside happenings). That is to say, *the patient's relation to his analyst is almost entirely one of unconscious phantasy*' (p. 78).

Thus *p* infers from *o*'s behaviour that *o*'s behaviour has a 'meaning' to which *o* is blind, and, in that sense, *o* cannot 'see' or 'realize' what his (*o*'s) actions are implying.

The analyst then says: 'The patient (*o*) is dominated by an "unconscious phantasy".'

It becomes imperative at this point to make a phenomenological distinction between two quite different usages of 'unconscious':

(i) The term 'unconscious' may connote dynamic structures, functions, mechanisms, processes, etc., postulated to account for (explain) a person's actions and/or his experiences. Concepts of such meta-experiential structures, functions, mechanisms, or processes can be used to 'explain' what experientially is either conscious or unconscious. These concepts are outside the realm of phenomenology, but depend on a correct phenomenology for their starting-point.

(ii) 'Unconscious' may refer to a mode of primary awareness of which the person is usually not reflectively aware.

We have to ask at this point, what is the phenomenological status of 'unconscious phantasy' as Isaacs uses this term. Isaacs, time and again, states that unconscious phantasy is an experience. 'A mechanism is an abstract general term describing certain mental processes which are *experienced by the subject as unconscious phantasies* (p. 112, italics my own).

And:

'Phantasy is (in the first instance) the mental corollary, the psychic representative, of instinct. There is no impulse, no instinctual urge or response *which is not experienced as unconscious phantasy*' (p. 83, italics my own).

'On the basis of those principles of observation and interpretation which have already been described and are well established by psycho-analytic work, we are able to conclude that when the child shows his desire for his mother's breast, he *experiences* this desire as a specific phantasy – "I want to suck the nipple". If desire is very intense (perhaps on account of anxiety), he is likely to feel: "I want to eat her all up" ' (p. 84, italics Isaacs's).

Thus, in Isaacs's usage, unconscious phantasy seems to denote a very basic and primary way of experiencing self and others, which contributes to, and sustains, our relations with others throughout life.

II

Now, there is not necessarily any phenomenological difficulty in speaking about 'unconscious experience'.

P's experience comprises anything that 'he' or 'any part of him' is aware of, whether 'he' or every part of him is aware of every level of his awareness or not. His experiences are inner or outer: of his own body or of other person's bodies: real or unreal: private or shared. They can also be distinguished as conscious or unconscious. The *'person' may never become reflectively aware, and he may never have been reflectively aware* of that mode of experience denoted by phantasy.

P may infer from *o*'s actions that there is a sense in which *o* is experiencing his-body-in-desire-for-the-other, and the-other-in-active-relation-to-him of which *o* has no reflective awareness. But *o*'s actions imply nevertheless for *p* that *o* is acting in the light of a pre-reflective awareness which has some entitlement to be regarded as the primary mode of experience. It is this primary mode of experience which is termed 'unconscious phantasy'.

There are, however, several issues in Isaacs's paper that do raise serious phenomenological difficulties, which run through the

whole of Isaacs's presentation, and are not specific to Isaacs, but hold for psycho-analytic theory in general.

They are crystallized in the following passage:

> 'When contrasted with external and bodily realities, the phantasy, like other mental activities, is a figment, since it cannot be touched or handled or seen; yet it is real in the experience of the subject. It is a true mental function and it has real effects, not only in the inner world of the mind but also in the external world of the subject's bodily development and behaviour, and hence of other people's minds and bodies' (p. 99).

Here, Isaacs appears to be deeply entangled in a number of confusions. As well as referring to phantasy as 'real in the experience of the subject', she refers to it also as 'a figment, *since* it cannot be touched or handled or seen'. She uses the term phantasy to denote both:

(i) 'real' experiences of which the subject is unconscious and (ii) a mental function which has 'real' effects, and these real *effects* are the real experiences.

Phantasy has now become both the cause of itself as effect, and the effect of itself as cause.

I shall confine my own use of the term phantasy rigorously to the experiential realm. Some other term than phantasy should be found for that whereby phantasy as a mode of experience is produced. It seems to me that this is a problem for physiology and ultimately for physics.

The basic source of confusion appears to be the gratuitous use of a particular dualistic schema, in which Isaacs has to deploy her theoretical formulations. This dualism involves her in setting up a distinction between:

'the inner world of the mind' on the one hand, and

'the external world of the subject's bodily development and behaviour, and hence of other people's minds and bodies' on the other.

Throughout her paper, and, of course, in many other psychoanalytic works, there are two clusters of terms used consistently in contradistinction to each other. I list the terms in two columns:

inner	in contrast to	*outer*
mental	in contrast to	*physical*
mental activity	in contrast to	*external and bodily realities*
figments	in contrast to	*what can be touched, handled, seen*
psychical reality	in contrast to	*physical reality*
the inner world of the mind	in contrast to	*the external world of the subject's bodily development, and hence of other people's minds and bodies*
mind	in contrast to	*body*

The concept seems to be that phantasy begins on the left-hand side of the page as an inner mental activity, but slips over *somehow or other* to the right-hand side of the page before it comes to be *experienced*; for it is experienced in terms of external and bodily reality, both in terms of one's own body and in terms of the bodies of others. Hence the need for such terms as conversion (a shift from *p*'s mind to *p*'s body) and projection (a shift from inner to outer).

This transition is an artifact of the particular dualistic schema here employed. Neither this dualism nor this transition is itself one of the series of facts that Isaacs sets out to describe. In so far as some people do actually experience themselves in these dualistic terms, as having a 'mind' that is a container holding 'contents', and a body external to 'the mind', one has to understand this as a form of self-division which one is under no obligation to take as one's theoretical starting-point.

Phantasy can certainly be *imagined* as going on 'in the mind'. The elimination of this particular use of the antithesis of (inner-

mental) – (external-physical) releases one from the unrewarding task of working out an entirely imaginary problem.

However, if one does give up this particular dualism, it is clear that one is immediately faced with a new set of problems. I suggest that these new problems are not simply *the same* problems dressed up in other words. They are certainly the old perennial problems in so far as they derive from the same phenomena as ever, but, it is hoped, the phenomena will be allowed more easily to come into view.

The following remarks are an attempt to clarify, in the light of the foregoing discussion, the position of metapsychology in relation to phenomenology.

Psychiatrists and psycho-analysts frequently use the term 'reality' in different ways. For instance, it may refer to:

(i) that which gives rise to experience of any kind;
(ii) a particular 'quality' that distinguishes some experiences from others lacking in this quality;[1]
(iii) whatever 'common sense' takes for granted.

Experiences are variously termed 'psychic' reality and 'physical' reality, 'internal' reality and 'external' reality, 'subjective' reality and 'objective' reality.

To consider only 'internal' and 'external', either of these terms may be used to refer to 'reality' in the first sense. In that case, 'inner reality' may not give rise to experience experienced as inner, but to experience experienced as outer, and vice versa. In either case, the 'reality' of the 'experience' (sense (ii) above), in contrast to 'the reality' that is presumed to have generated the experience (sense (i) above), may be subdivided on experiential grounds into 'internal' or 'external' in respect of the spatial boundaries of self or other. 'Internal' is used sometimes synonymously

[1] I distinguish 'quality' from mode (or type) of experience. Dreaming is a mode of experience that is distinguishable by the waking person from waking perception by various criteria. In my own usage, I refer to dreams, phantasy, imagination, and apperception as different modes of experience. 'Reality' in sense (ii) may be a quality attached at times to any modality. Phantasy has often a very strong quality of 'reality'.

with 'psychic' or 'subjective' in contrast to 'external', 'physical', or 'objective'. 'Internal' and 'external', however, may be used to discriminate between dreams and waking life, or 'imaginary' and 'real' events, where the *phenomenological* distinction is not spatially internal or external in the immediate experience of the person, but between one type of experience and another.

We frequently find 'mind' used in the sense of the reality of a meta-experiential source of experience. Thus *p* may attribute bodily feelings to *o*, but say that they have in some sense their origin 'in the mind' of *o*, that, thus, they are 'psychogenic'. Since the body is often classified (as by Isaacs) as a part of 'external reality' – 'external', that is, to 'the mind' – 'conversion' is evoked by *p* to 'explain' how an 'event' 'in the mind' of *o* is experienced by *o* not in his mind, but as an 'external' or 'physical' 'reality'.

Such concepts as conversion, projection, or introjection do not *describe* what is actually going on in *o*'s experience: in so far as they are 'explanations' of *o*'s experience in terms of so-called 'mechanisms', it is seldom clear what attributed experiences they 'explain'. But further, as mechanisms postulated to provide a shuttle service between two worlds, their validity rests on the validity of a very confused dualistic philosophy of psychical and physical, inner and outer, mental and physical. Moreover, the theory then starts a mad spiral, for if metaphenomenological postulates masquerade as experiential attributions (when, for instance, a bodily experience will be said to be a 'mental event', going on 'external to the mind'), secondary postulates have to be devised to 'explain' how what is 'in' the 'mind' can be experienced as 'outside' 'the mind' and 'in' the 'body'.

Psycho-analytic theory is largely based on attributions by *p* (analyst) about *o*'s (the analysand's) experiences, which *o* (analysand) says he is not aware of having. That he (*o*) is, or is not, aware of them is in itself an inference on *p*'s part from *o*'s actions or testimony. They are about so-called 'unconscious' experience or phantasy. In *meta*psychology, concepts are introduced *by p* to 'explain' experiential data directly available to *p*, or to explain

experiential data inferred by *p*, and attributed by *p* to *o*. Such experiences, inferred by *p* about *o*, may be inferred as past or present, 'conscious' or 'unconscious'.

Now, in doing this the psycho-analyst is taking the basic phenomenological step, which is both necessary and hazardous.

He has to step beyond his own experience of the patient, into the patient's experience of him.

Now, I said this step was both necessary and hazardous.

It is *necessary* if one is to begin to understand the patient.

One makes this step all the time when one understands to any extent the other person's point of view. Existential analysis, however, differs from this naïve 'natural' understanding, in that

(i) the difference, or the extent of disjunction (Laing, 1960), between the patient's point of view and one's own is liable to be greater than that ordinarily met with, and hence greater than that with which naïve 'common sense' is equipped to deal;

(ii) it is an attempt to understand the patient's being-in-his-world systematically, and not simply in 'flashes' of 'intuition' or in occasional 'moments' of recognition;

(iii) it is an attempt to do this in a self-critical way, with examination of its criteria for the truth-value of its propositions. In short, it is a scientific discipline, but it is existential science, not natural science.

It is *hazardous* because the pitfalls are so real, so subtle, and so numerous.

Obviously, the psychiatrist may not step into the patient's experience, he may simply step through the looking-glass into his own projected phantasy, and, if he does, there are few signposts to bring him to his senses. It is hazardous also because he lacks at present the security and assurance of well-worked-out

criteria of verifiability, comparable to those that natural science has been able to develop in its relatively long history.

It is important to emphasize that the other person's experience can never be a primary datum of one's own experience. Hence one must distinguish between the *phenomenology* of the phenomenological *method*, and the *logic* of phenomenological inferences.

The phenomenology of the existential analytic method has not been sufficiently studied. At present, one can provisionally refer to 'empathy', or 'intuitive understanding' as descriptive terms for the act of correctly understanding the other. This has to occur within the context of 'meeting' the other. But what processes are involved, what the individual variations are, is very much a matter for research. A certain amount of work has been done recently on this subject (Heider, 1958; Bruner *et al.* 1958).

In addition to the phenomenology of acts of attributing motives, agency, intention, and experiences of one kind or another to another human being, the logic of the inference implied in such phenomenological attributions is a matter for separate investigation.

It appears to be impossible to derive the basic logic of a science, whose primary task includes the study of this specific area, from the logic of other sciences, since no other science is involved in making the peculiar type of inferences that are here not only unavoidable, but central. To quote Mounier: 'The person is not an object that can be inspected, but is a centre of re-orientation of the objective universe.'

The one person (p) investigating the phenomenal world of the other can be directly aware only of his own experience of the world. He cannot have direct awareness of the other's experience of the 'same' world. He cannot see through the other's eyes, and cannot hear through the other's ears, and so on.[1] Everything the one person 'feels', 'senses', 'intuits', etc., of the other implies a

[1] The only true voyage (Proust once remarked) would not be to travel through a hundred different lands with the same pair of eyes, but to see the same land through a hundred different pairs of eyes.

logic of inference from his own experience of the other to the other's experience of him. This inference presupposes that the other's actions are in some way a function of the other's experience. It is only on the basis of this presupposition or assumption, however qualified it may be, that it becomes feasible to hazard inferences about the other's experience from one's own perspective of the other's actions.

The inferences that the one person (*p*) makes about the other's (*o*'s) experience from his (*p*'s) direct and immediate perception of the other person's actions, form one category of what I am calling acts of attribution.[1] No other science can supply the phenomenologist directly with the criteria for the validity of his attributions, and phenomenology has not, as yet, its own sufficiently rigorous criteria. Phenomenology is, however, *in potentia*, a primary discipline in the study of human relatedness.

However, if the psycho-analyst's first step is to plunge right into the deep end of phenomenology, he takes a second step which carries him as radically out of phenomenology as he has entered it. In this second, extra-phenomenological step, beyond the mere attribution of agency, motive, intention, etc., he proceeds to postulate various laws, agencies, forces, energies, processes, structures, etc. Psycho-analytic concepts on this meta-experiential level include concepts of mental structures, economics, dynamisms, death and life instincts, internal objects,[2] etc. They are postulated by *p*, the theorizer, to account for, or in some way elucidate, *experience* of his own or experience attributed by him to the other, without in themselves denoting experience, conscious or unconscious, past or present, whether *p*'s experience of *o*, *o*'s experience of himself, or *o*'s experience of *p*.

There is thus an intraphenomenological level in psycho-analytic theory, and an extraphenomenological level. The phenomenological level consists of two parts:

[1] Following the current usage of person perception psychology, see especially Heider (1958).

[2] 'Internal object' is used sometimes phenomenologically, sometimes metapsychologically. For a lucid psycho-analytic statement on this ambiguity, see Strachey (1941).

(a) statements by the analyst about his experience of himself and of the analysand;
(b) attributions made by the analyst about the analysand's experience on the basis of the analysand's actions and/or testimony.

The analyst (p) therefore makes phenomenological inferences, which form an essential component of any interpretation, with particular reference to:

(i) how the analysand (o) sees himself ($o \rightarrow o$);
(ii) how the analysand sees the analyst ($o \rightarrow p$);
(iii) how the analysand sees the situation he shares with the analyst ($o \rightarrow s$).

O may or may not agree that he (o) is experiencing himself (o), p, or s, or that he is acting, in the ways attributed to him by p.

The extraphenomenological level of psycho-analytic theory rests entirely upon the validity of these phenomenological inferences; if the phenomenological level is faulty or confused, the extraphenomenological 'explanation' loses its *raison d'être*: it will be an anatomy of chimeras and unicorns: it will be a house built on sand.

Psycho-analytic theory suffers at present from two serious weaknesses. First, the phenomenological level of psycho-analytic theory and practice is not clearly delineated and recognized as such: postulates about entirely hypothetical processes (metapsychology) tend to be confused with attributions about action and experience, and there is confusion between p's direct experience of himself and o's actions, and attributions p makes about o's direct experience. Secondly, no adequate and systematic criteria of validity are yet worked out for attributions made by p about o's experiences and actions. Its strength is its concern to understand a mode of experience, which most people are too much *inside* to apperceive. This experience we shall now examine.

CHAPTER II

Phantasy and the social nexus[1]

What seems usually intended by the terms 'inner world' and 'outer world' is the Heraclitean distinction between private and common experience. From the experiencer's point of view, inner bodily experience is not always private (beating of the heart). Outer experience may be shareable or private (an 'hallucinated' external voice). Most bodily experience is real and cannot be shared. A toothache is a real bodily experience which is private. An hallucinated voice may be a private external experience, that is, an event experienced as outside oneself, but also experienced as private or non-shareable. An external event may not then be entirely 'real' for *p* if *p* does not feel that it is 'real' for *o*. Patients may sometimes feel that, if I know them very well, then something that is real for them *must* be real for me, even if it belongs to an area of unqualified privacy (their own uncommunicated thoughts). One can readily see how confusing it will be if *p*'s sense of his own area of privacy differs from what the common-sense norm is. This applies also to *o*'s privacy from *p*'s point of view. If one has a burn on one's arm, the sight of the burn is shared, the pain private. If *p* feels not only that his own privacy is lost to him, but also that he is granted access to the privacy of others, his life will be no less tormented. It is common to find that such a person is as tormented by his feeling that he can read other

Nexus: a particular type of group characterized by the members of the group being connected by bonds of high valency.

people's minds and discover their secrets, as he is by his sense of his own lack of privacy.

We usually suppose that the other's body is, first, shareable with him up to a point, second, public property shareable by all *except* him, and third, private to him. The body has thus a transitional position in a three-fold sense, experienced multi-dimensionally in a way that no other object (for all other objects are external to *all* men) can be.

The body-for-self appears in dreams, imagination, and phantasy. In whichever of these modalities it occurs it may be experienced as alive or dead, real or unreal, whole or in bits, as a private or as a public event. From the standpoint of the reflexive awareness of sanity, however, one's own body-for-self is essentially a private experience, and the body-for-self of the other is essentially inaccessible. In phantasy, however, this is not necessarily so. The absence of any possible consensual validation in this area perhaps facilitates its encroachment by phantasy unrecognized as such. Was such the case, for instance, with Gerard Manley Hopkins?

Now, while there is a sense in which all experience could be held to be private, since each person experiences any event, however public that event may be, in his own way, and experience even of public events can be said therefore to be 'private' in a qualified sense, there is an area of experience which is private in an unqualified sense. It is of the area of unqualified privacy that Gerard Manley Hopkins (1953) speaks in the following words:

> '. . . my selfbeing, my consciousness and feeling of myself, that taste of myself, of *I* and *me* above and in all things, which is more distinctive than the taste of ale or alum, more distinctive than the smell of walnutleaf or camphor, and is incommunicable by any means to another man' (pp. 147–8).

My self-being, my consciousness and feeling of myself, that taste of myself, of I and me above and in all things, is that from which I live out into the world and meet other people. I can taste

this, no one else. This is exclusively mine, happily or unhappily, and that of the other is his and ever essentially beyond my reach.

It is one of the most difficult tasks of the psychiatrist to understand the self-being of *the other*. Since this is in very essence that aspect of the other which I cannot observe directly, I must rely on the other's action and testimony for my inferences about how he experiences himself. But it is this area in which the psychiatrist is immediately involved when he listens to the testimony of his patients. By what token do changes in the way a man experiences his self-being, that is, changes in his being-for-himself, determine his own definition of himself as 'ill', 'physically' or 'psychologically'? And, similarly, what leads *p* to decide that the self-being of the other, that is, *o*'s being-for-himself, is sick?

The Hopkins of ale and alum, of walnutleaf and camphor, was later to write:

> *I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree*
> *Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;*
> *Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.*
> *Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see*
> *The lost are like this, and their scourge to be*
> *As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.*
>
> (op. cit. p. 62.)

Thousands of people have come to psychiatrists to be 'cured' of less than this. And after the courses of electric shocks, thousands have indeed felt 'better'.

Hopkins knew that this taste, of ale or of gall, was *him*. To be 'cured' of this might be more problematical than any other cure, for to become estranged from one's self-being is to lose touch with one's very heart's core.

The loss of the experience of the *unqualified privacy* of this area, by its transformation into a quasi-public realm, is often one of the decisive changes associated with the process of going mad.[1] Yet

[1] This formulation is not simply a recasting of the 'loss of ego boundary' theory (see Laing, 1960, p. 216).

even 'the world', although 'common' to all persons and in that sense 'shareable', can never be experienced by two individuals in absolutely the same way. When two men look at a landscape, and one likes it and the other does not, there is already a gulf between them. How much is this augmented when experiences are so utterly disjunctive as in the case when the one is sane and the other is mad? But before we say that the sane experience is true and the mad one false, that is, a *distortion* of 'reality' or something of this fashion, we may consider what can happen when two sane people from the same culture are looking at one landscape. To one man the landscape may simply be itself, full of its 'is-ness': he feels a delicate sadness, perhaps, at his otherness from it. To the other, the 'same' trees and sky and grass are seen as creation: they are a veil, they are sacraments, revealing through themselves their Creator. Whereas for the one there may be little or no sense of connexion between himself and nature outside himself, the other may experience a most intimate bond.

In so far as we experience the world differently, in a sense we live in different worlds;[1] yet *the* world – the world around me, the world in which I live, *my* world – is, in the very texture of its mode of being-for-me, not exclusively my world, but your world also, his world, a shared world, *one* world, *the* world.

There is in fact no necessary correlation between the publicity, 'realness', and shareability. Persons can be most alone in their experience of the most public of spectacles; and most together in the sharing of the most 'real', yet unqualifiedly private of events.

In the realm of the interpersonal, the sharing of a common experience may be a token of the most genuine bond between two persons, or a token of the most abject bondage.

Phantasy, as a mode of experience, may or may not be experienced, by either *p* or *o*, as private or public, shareable or

[1] 'The universe is full of men going through the same motions in the same surroundings, but carrying within themselves, and projecting around them, universes as mutually remote as the constellations' (Mounier, 1952, p. 5).

unshareable, 'real' or unreal. The other who plays a part in *p*'s 'private' phantasy may not experience himself in the same light as *p* experiences him. He (*o*) *may*, however, share the same phantasy as *p*, in such a way that *o* and *p* are the 'complements' of each other on this phantasy level. The ordinary individual loses his 'individual distinctiveness' (Bion, 1955) in interacting with others on a phantasy level,[1] but he is usually completely 'unconscious' of so doing, in fact he may even feel enhanced in his individuality, at least temporarily.

Bion describes his experience as the analyst at certain moments in a group when he 'feels he is being manipulated so as to be playing a part, no matter how difficult to recognize, in *somebody else's* phantasy – or he would do if it were not for what in recollection he can only call a temporary loss of insight, a sense of experiencing strong feelings and at the same time a belief that their existence is quite adequately justified by the objective situation without recourse to recondite explanation of their causation' (p. 446).

Now, one must note how insidious what one might call this 'alienation effect' is. Even an experienced analyst can be drawn into such a *social phantasy system* (Jaques, 1955), with loss of his individual identity in the process, and only in retrospect may he become aware of this having happened. Bion goes on: 'I believe the ability to shake oneself out of the *numbing feeling of reality* that is a concomitant of this state is the prime requisite of the analyst in the group . . .' (op. cit. p. 446, italics my own).

The remarkable fact here observed is that the loss of one's own individual perceptions and evaluations (the loss of one's own apperceptions), what I shall term being placed in a false position,[2] is only 'realized' retrospectively. While the person is alienated, he may feel 'real'; and without '*feeling*' numb he may *be* numbed, as

[1] See also Bion's concept of 'valency' (op. cit. p. 449).

[2] Bion, although placed in a false position, was not placed in an 'untenable' one. I shall try to demonstrate subsequently how the one person may become psychotic in equally vain efforts to occupy, or to extricate himself from, an *untenable* position in which he is placed by others and/or by himself on a phantasy level.

far as his insight or apperception is concerned, by this very feeling of 'reality'. It takes quite extraordinary ability consistently to shake oneself out of this false sense of reality. This entails a *derealization* of the prior false sense of reality, and a *rerealization* of a new sense of reality. Only then is a person able to apperceive the social phantasy system in which he has been submerged.

The mode of experience that we are trying to bring into focus is not necessarily experienced *as* phantasy therefore, although the content of the experience may be partly conscious. A person may be 'unconscious' of phantasy as the *modality* of his experience, while being conscious of the *content* of his phantasy.

This observation has a number of important implications.

One cannot expect to have one's impression (as *p*) that *o* is alienated confirmed by direct testimony from *o*. *O* may *feel*, while alienated, far from alienated. Bion speaks of the fact that the individual in a group may be involved 'in a loss of his "individual distinctiveness" ' as 'indistinguishable from depersonalization'. That is, 'depersonalization' in Bion's sense may not be experienced by the individual involved as a loss of any personal attributes.[1]

However, psychotically, a person placed in an alienated, false position within a social phantasy system, who is unable fully to apperceive his position, may give psychotic expression to his partial apperception of the actual phantasy state of affairs by saying that he is being subjected to poisons concealed in his food, that his brains have been taken from him, that his actions are controlled from outer space, etc. *Such delusions are derealizations – rerealizations gone wrong.*

Some groups operate within themselves almost entirely on a phantasy level. The family may be such a group or nexus. I suggest that individuals vary in their ability (and perhaps in their need) to shake themselves out of the phantasy system of a nexus. If the person has a tenable position within the family phantasy

[1] I believe it to be useful to retain the term depersonalization for a state of the individual as he himself experiences it, rather than as an attribution made by *p* to *o*, which is disjunctive with *o*'s self-attributions.

system, there may not be great urgency in any strivings to emerge from it. But if his position is untenable, then his need to emerge is more desperate, while his means of doing so are already undermined.

I shall bring forward, in the following pages, evidence in support of the following three propositions:

(i) Certain persons live in a position in the phantasy system of a nexus from which *they have never extricated themselves.* When this happens, the person's actions and experiences are all under the spell of an 'alienation effect'.

(ii) A person may be placed in two or more incompatible positions in dissonant phantasy systems within the same nexus. When this persistently happens to a person, there may be no single or basic position he can hold *or* leave, even in his own phantasy. His position is in that sense *untenable.*

(iii) A psychotic crisis may occur as a partially successful, partially failed, effort to apperceive the social phantasy system in which a person is immersed.

If we are to further the understanding of the bond and/or bondage in the interaction and inter-experience of persons, we shall have to show how the actions of the one person (p) or of a nexus of persons can affect the other person's phantasy of himself and of the others, so that his (p's) phantasy becomes more conjunctive or disjunctive with their phantasy. If one person's phantasy of a situation he is in with others comes to be widely disjunctive with the others' phantasy of the 'same' situation, his actions are likely to become more and more dissonant with the actions of the others. At some point in the developing disjunction of phantasy and dissonance of action, the person comes to be judged by the others as 'different'. There seem to be two basic parameters along which 'difference' of this kind is ultimately measured. The person is saint or bad, genius or mad. Later in this

study, we shall try to show ways in which a person, within a personal nexus, may come to be allocated and/or to assume a mad position. The more usual way to express this is to say that the person is 'inaccessible' or 'out of contact with reality'.

This 'reality' is always socially relative and more often than not it is the reality of phantasy. The quality of reality experienced inside the nexus of phantasy is an enchanting spell. Outside, the world seems cold, empty, meaningless, unreal. Within, it may seem neither desirable nor possible to leave. But the choice may come to be either to suffocate to death inside, or to take the risk of exposing oneself to whatever terrors there may be outside.

The way out is via the door. But within the phantasy of the nexus, to leave may be an act of ingratitude, of cruelty, of suicide, of murder. The first steps have to be taken still within the phantasy, before it can be apperceived as such from outside. Herein is the risk of defeat or madness.

It has been frequently noted that some schizophrenics are more 'in touch' with 'the unconscious' than are 'normal' people. A drowning man may be more 'in touch with' the sea than the fish?

With the foregoing considerations in mind, I put forward the following ten propositions that can, perhaps, clarify the phenomenology of phantasy:

(i) It is a mode of experience. As such, it is not necessarily more inner than outer, nor more mental than physical.
(ii) It is a basic mode of experiencing oneself in relation to others, and others in relation to oneself. As such, it need not be more infantile than adult, nor more primitive than advanced.
(iii) It is ontogenetically probably the first mode of experience to arise, in so far as it is probably a mode of experience that antedates reflective awareness.
(iv) The phantasy life of adults is potentially a development of the phantasy life of infants. Only where this development

has been stunted or arrested does adult phantasy life appear to be a direct repetition of infantile phantasy.[1]

(v) Most people are unconscious of this mode of experience. This is not necessarily so. Phantasy can become conscious, in so far as a person can allow his own reflective awareness to be open to it. In becoming thoroughly and radically aware of phantasy both in terms of *content* (see viii) and *modality*, the person is subject in his whole being to a re-evaluation of himself and others. The character of his total participation in the world is profoundly affected at all levels.

(vi) All experience that is 'unconscious' to a person need not be phantasy. A person may be unaware of experience in other modalities than phantasy. Unconscious infantile memories of adults, for instance, are not phantasies, nor are they necessarily memories of infantile phantasies.

(vii) When a person is unconscious of his own phantasy, this phantasy may be 'obvious' to another person, if that person has become aware of phantasy. However 'obvious' this may be, epistemologically it remains an inference. Adequate criteria for the validity of such inferences remain to be stated.

(viii) Phantasies involve issues of full/empty, good/bad, destruction/reparation, anxiety/security, and so on. In phantasy,

[1] cf. The following passage from Brierley (1951):

'The conception of a closed system of infantile phantasy, or enclave, as a kind of magical entity dominating future development is highly undesirable; it can arise only out of too concrete notions about mental life. Every mental event is a process, or series of processes; memories and phantasies are not stored in a three-dimensional mind, like pictures in a gallery or books in a library; they are modifications of the psychic energy pattern whose permanence is implied in Freud's own hypothesis of memory traces. A current reaction is always the resultant of an immediate stimulus acting on the organism as modified by past experience. It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that the time-sequence of experience is decisive in the sense that earlier happenings inevitably modify later events. The kind of influence exerted by any particular experience, e.g. a given phantasy, on later development will depend upon the economic fate of that experience. An ego-syntonic phantasy will contribute to the pattern of ego-organization and undergo further developmental modification along with the ego, whereas an ego-dystonic phantasy may form the nucleus of a dissociated and, therefore, potentially pathogenic system. Glover himself accepts the relative autonomy of dissociated systems. Bibring criticizes any attempt to explain the whole of subsequent development as completely determined by infantile "residues", and says, very rightly, that a theory of residues is acceptable though its exclusive application is not.'

these issues are experienced primarily in physical terms. They always involve the union, confusion, separation, splitting, destruction, and repairing of bodies and parts of bodies in relation.

(ix) The firm distinctions between self and other, between the whole of a person and parts of a person, do not hold for phantasy. The data on the earliest schemata of self and world educed by Piaget and others are highly relevant to the further understanding of the logic of phantasy. Psychoanalytic writings are rich mines of the phenomenology of phantasy in twentieth-century Western man.

(x) One lives all the time involved in, and participating in, other persons' phantasy modality, as they do in one's own. The relatedness of self and other that can occur on a phantasy level is as basic to all human relatedness as the interactions that most people most of the time are more aware of.

In the following chapters we shall try to understand the relation of phantasy to dreams and to imagination.

CHAPTER III

Pretence and the elusion of experience

'Let us consider this waiter in the café. His movement is quick and forward, a little too precise, a little too rapid. He comes toward the patrons with a step a little too quick. He bends forward a little too eagerly; his voice, his eyes express an interest a little too solicitous for the order of the customer. Finally there he returns, trying to imitate in his walk the inflexible stiffness of some kind of automaton while carrying his tray with the recklessness of a tight-rope-walker by putting it in a perpetually unstable, perpetually broken equilibrium which he perpetually re-establishes by a light movement of the arm and hand. All his behaviour seems to us a game. He applies himself to chaining his movements as if they were mechanisms, the one regulating the other; his gestures and even his voice seem to be mechanisms; he gives himself the quickness and pitiless rapidity of things. He is playing, he is amusing himself. But what is he playing? We need not watch long before we can explain it: he is playing at *being* a waiter in a café.'

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE, (1957, p. 59).

It is indubitably true that this man *is* a waiter in a café. However, in so far as he is not simply being a waiter in a café, but impersonating a waiter in a café, he is, in a sense, eluding his role. In the exercise of his capacity to play at what he is or at doing what

he is doing, 'he' sets himself at one remove from his actions as they are observable and defineable by another. In this way he eludes the other, and in a sense eludes himself simultaneously. Here we shall consider primarily ways in which a person eludes himself. There is a sense in which no man can ever be entirely what he is. However, the man who is actually impersonating himself assuming a role, is assuming a relationship to himself which is a very ambiguous one, in that he is both pushing himself into what he is doing, and at the same time not doing what he is doing. The waiter could be playing at being an actor playing at being a waiter, he could intentionally be having fun, ironically, at his situation by self-caricature, but if he 'knows' the game he is playing, if he is playing it as a game, he would be much less 'lost', no matter how intricate the game may be, than would be the case if we suppose that his pretence so envelops the game itself that he would be incredulous if one were to tell him, 'You know, you are playing a game here; you are pretending to be a waiter in a café'.

The complicated elusive relationship to one's actual 'position' can be imagined in the following way:

1. One is sitting in a room.

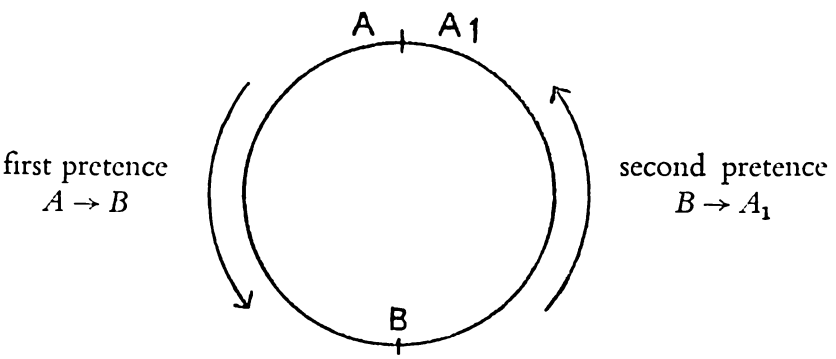
2. One imagines or pretends that the room is not a real room, but is a room that one is conjuring up by one's own imagination: $(A \rightarrow B)$.

3. Having pretended this point almost to convincing oneself that the room is an imaginary room, one then starts pretending that the room is a real room and not an imaginary room after all: $(B \rightarrow A_1)$.

4. One ends up, therefore, by pretending that the real room is real, rather than perceiving it as real.

I propose to call this manœuvre *elusion*. Elusion is a manœuvre of the self in relation to self and/or others as well as to things. In elusion, one pretends oneself away from one's original position about oneself; then pretends oneself back from this pretence so that one appears to have arrived back at the starting-point, but

one will have, in fact, simulated having done so by a double pretence. The only way to 'realize' the original state of affairs would be to forgo the first pretence, rather than to add a second pretence to it.



The positions A and A_1 on the perimeter of the circle are separated by an impermeable barrier which may be as thin and transparent as one cares to imagine. The person having begun at point A moves towards B. Instead of going back in a clockwise direction to A, he continues in an anti-clockwise direction to point A_1. A and A_1 are 'near and yet so far'. They may be so close that a person may say, 'Well, is not A_1 just as good as A, when it is geometrically almost indistinguishable from A?' And yet he knows at the same time that he is living behind an invisible veil which separates him from the naked apperception of the reality and truth of the position he is in in relation to himself and the other. One is reminded here of Anna Freud's (1954) comments on the child in *When We were Very Young*, by A. A. Milne.

> 'In the nursery of this three-year-old there are four chairs. When he sits on the first, he *is* an explorer, sailing up the Amazon by night. On the second he is a lion, frightening his nurse with a roar; on the third he is a captain, steering his ship

over the sea. But on the fourth, a child's high-chair, he *tries to pretend* that he is simply himself, just a little boy' (p. 89).

Let us contemplate another situation very similar to one Sartre (op. cit. p. 55) has presented. A young girl is on her first date with a man. They are sitting in a café. The conversation turns on philosophy, and moves to Plato's theory of love. The man is out to turn the situation into a sexual one sooner or later. But at the moment both of them are engaged in discussing love as a theoretical problem in philosophy. The girl feels a vague disturbance in herself which she cannot or does not choose to look at too closely. As long as she does not define her feelings, she is able to convince herself that 'the situation' is simply one in which she is discussing an intellectual problem with a friend, and that she is in no sense in a 'compromising' position. While the conversation goes on in this way, the man places his hand over the girl's as it lies on top of the table. Here the girl is placed in an acute dilemma. If she leaves her hand under the man's, she is acknowledging the fact that he has made an advance, which implies that his relationship with her involves more, or that he wants it to involve more, than pure philosophical speculation. Her position is no better if she withdraws her hand, for she would still be implicitly acknowledging that there was something else to the situation than she is pretending there is. In other words, she cannot leave her hand where it is, or withdraw it, without shattering her pretence, her self-deception, her 'bad faith', as Sartre says. What she does is to look at her hand as *a* hand lying on the table with *a* man's hand on top of it, and to say to herself, 'How odd that there are two hands lying on the table.' She pretends for the time being that her hand and his are just two *things*. In this way, 'the situation' and her 'position' in it can remain unchanged for her.

In elusion, everything becomes elusive. Its symbols are will-o'-the-wisps, feathers, dust, fluff, straws in the wind – all that is difficult to grasp, grip, hold with one's hands, pin down, control, handle, manipulate, define, catch. Not only the content of the

situation but its qualities and modalities are eluded also. It evades being categorized as real or unreal imagination or phantasy. The elusive can best survive in enchanted gardens, in the realm of Beulah, the realm of the moon, under Chinese lanterns, rather than under the naked electric bulb.

One finds that person who is entirely given over to a phantasy of something that can be searched for and found. He *is* only his own very searching. What one has is always *not* what one wants, and yet it is precisely the elusiveness of this want that one is unable to say what one wants, lacks, has not got, because what one wants (lacks) is precisely what one has not got.

What is, what one is, what other people are, facts – this is not what is wanted. Those brute facts that cannot be eluded are repellent if not nauseating, disgusting, and obscene. This 'reality', so coarse, so vulgar, so fleshy, tends usually to be epitomized by the other: for the woman it is men, for the man it is women in their earthy aspects.

The penis penetrates the woman as the messenger of the immediate; the killer and destroyer of her flimsy, delicate tissue of dreams, the gentleman caller who shatters the glass unicorn. She is raped by the real, by brute fact, by necessity, by the here and now. There is nothing that arouses or fascinates some men more than the presence of such a female existence – as though it was their mission, and the meaning of their sexuality, to be the messenger of the concrete.

But if a person's whole way of life becomes characterized by elusion, he becomes a prisoner in a limbo world, in which illusion ceases to be a dream that comes true, but comes to be the realm in which he dwells, and in which he has become trapped. To be constantly sustained, elusion requires great virtuosity: the dissonances of phantasy-imagination-reality can have great charm if kept implicit, but if too explicit they become cacophony. The definitive statement of this in literature is *Madame Bovary*. In this twilight realm time is evaded. Time must stand still. The person lives 'in' the past, or 'in' the future. The present is never real-ized.

One discovers, for instance, men or women[1] who have pretended for years that they have been having gratifying sexual relations. Their whole lives can become so much based on pretence that they lose any distinction between what is really gratifying or frustrating and what they are pretending is gratifying or frustrating. Clinically, such people are usually called hysterics.

The hysteric may have, paradoxically, intense sexual desire and never achieve complete sexual gratification. The hysteric cannot be entirely gratified by his or her private phantom relationships and is yet unable sufficiently to forgo the phantom relationships to make way for the naked reality of an actual one, for no real relationship can be trusted not to be too disappointing.

Such phantom relationships have important effects on the bodily experience of hysterics. The hysterical secret relationship with the phantom lover may keep the body in a state of perpetual irritated, itchy excitement that prompts to a constant search for sexual release, for the sensations evoked in the body by imaginary intercourse with a phantom other are real, but they cannot be really quietened. Hysterics frequently say that they have more real feelings in imaginary situations than they can experience in real ones. Thus, the hysteric may work up real sexual excitement in imaginary anticipation of intercourse, but when it comes to the actual event he or she experiences again and again intense disappointment. To live in the past or in the future may be less satisfying than to live in the present, but it can never be as disillusioning. The present will never be what has been or what could be. But in the constant restless discontent and searching for something else, there is an enervating sense of pointlessness and hopelessness.

The otherness of the other is eluded. The other is related to as the embodiment of phantasy. The real separate existence of the

[1] The following account applies equally to both sexes, although, for facility of statement, I shall sometimes not explicitly designate both sexes. It is not only those people who are clinically categorized as hysterics or are hysterical characters who employ this manœuvre persistently.

other is not unequivocably accepted. The person treats the other as embodied phantom 'as if' he or she were another person, and at the same time as if a private possession. In Winnicott's (1958) term, the other is treated as a 'transitional object'. This is yet another pretence. The hysteric recognizes in one sense, or on one level, the other as not-self, as a 'person', not as a 'part-object' or as a thing, but counterfeits the full acceptance of this. It is helpful to this end if the other will collude with his elusions and illusions. Characteristically, he or she becomes frightened and angry to discover the other not to be the embodiment of his or her phantasy prototype of the other. Living in this way, the hysteric may not lack frequent illusionment, but is likely to be subject to not infrequent disillusion. Each other person encountered may be seen as an oasis in the desert of his or her actual life, only to turn into a mirage on getting closer. The dilution of phantasy with reality and reality with phantasy (for it seems that the elusive way of fusing the two has the effect not of potentiating either but of diluting each) necessarily entails some degree of depersonalization and derealization.

The hysteric thus lives in a peculiar limbo. He can be seen both as an introvert and an extravert – in the Jungian sense of these terms. In his flights from and toward satisfaction he may have formed 'inner' bonds with others through their imagined presence to him, undreamed of by more easily satisfied people. But his discontent with 'mere' imagination may make him very dependent on others in the hope that they will embody his imagination and help him to elude the frightening and sinister aspects of his imagination or phantasy. The need to seek actual others rather than imaginary others to embody his phantasy may cause the hysteric intense involvement with people and things outside himself. He searches in actual others for the satisfaction that eludes him in imagination, and imagines all the time the satisfactions lacking in reality.

After several months of an affair begun in an atmosphere of enchantment and now pursuing a course of disenchantment and

disillusion, Yvette saw the end in view. She imagined various versions of the final dramatic split-up, and discovered herself weeping bitterly in the midst of her engrossed imagining of the scene. She remarked how characteristic this was of her, that she was shedding those real tears with such intense feeling in a self-conjured-up situation that existed, as yet, only in her imagination. She predicted, quite correctly, that 'when that time came' she would feel nothing at all. Indeed, the actual ending of her affair came in a rather prosaic, dull way without comedy or tragedy. When it had finally ended, she was relatively quiet and serene for some weeks. Then retrospective dramatization began. She relived in imagination a past situation which had never been more than imagined. But retrospectively the past imaginary situation had become the real one. Her real feelings clicked with her present situation only in the enchanted beginning of a love affair. At all other times of her life she pretended to feel in the actual present situation and seemed only spontaneously happy or sad in imagination. In this way she perhaps eluded the experience of unequivocal frustration, but the price she paid for this manœuvre was that unequivocal gratification eluded her.

Elusion, by its very nature, is difficult to pin down, since, as we have seen, it counterfeits truth by a double pretence. The trouble with the hysteric is that he is pretending to be what he is, instead of being it.

This manœuvre can be got into focus by comparing it to the more essentially schizoid issues described in *The Divided Self* (Laing, 1960).

In that study, descriptions were given of ways in which certain insecure persons seek to come to some *modus vivendi* with their anxiety and despair. In particular, we described that form of self-division which involves a split of the person's being into a disembodied mind and a de-animate body. With this loss of unity, the person preserves a sense of having an 'inner' 'true' self which is, however, unrealized, whereas the 'outer' 'real' or 'actual' self is 'false'. We tried to demonstrate that this position is a

desperate attempt to come to terms with one form of 'ontological insecurity'.

The man-in-the-street takes a lot for granted: for instance, that he has a body which has an inside and an outside; that he has begun at his birth and ends biologically speaking at his death; that he occupies a position in space; that he occupies a position in time; that he exists as a continuous being from one place to the next and from one moment to the other. The ordinary person does not reflect upon these basic elements of his being because he takes his way of experiencing himself and others for granted. However, the schizoid, and still more the schizophrenic, has a precarious sense of his own person (and other persons) as adequately embodied, as alive, as real, as substantial, and as a continuous being, who is at one place at one time, and at a different place at another time, remaining the 'same' throughout. In the absence of a secure 'base', he lacks a sense of personal unity, and a sense of himself as the agent of his own actions (instead of a robot, a machine, a *thing*), and as the agent of his own perceptions (someone else is using his eyes, his ears, etc.).

In moving from the schizoid to the hysteric, one is no longer primarily concerned with the issues that arise out of a primary ontological insecurity *of this order*. The person's active energies are not primarily occupied in preventing personal disintegration.

Although man is always poised between being and non-being, non-being is not necessarily encountered as *personal* disintegration. The insecurity attendant upon a precariously established personal unity is *one* form of ontological insecurity, if this term is used in its philosophical sense: that is, to denote the insecurity inescapably within the heart of man's finite being.

Tillich (1952) speaks of the possibilities of non-being in the three directions of ultimate meaninglessness, ultimate condemnation, and ultimate annihilation in death. In those three directions, man as a spiritual being, as a moral being, as a biological being, faces the possibility of his own annihilation, or non-being.

The ontological insecurity described in *The Divided Self* is a

fourth possibility. Here, man, as a person, encounters non-being, in a preliminary form, as partial loss of the synthetic unity of self, concurrently with partial loss of relatedness with the other, and in an ultimate form, in the hypothetical end-state of *chaotic nonentity*, and total loss of relatedness with the other.

While the schizoid is engaged in 'security operations', to use H. S. Sullivan's phrase, one might say that the hysteric is engaged in sincerity operations. The whole issue is joined on a different level of experience and action.

It is usually the others who complain of the hysteric's lack of genuineness or sincerity. In fact, it is regarded as pathognomonic of the hysteric that his or her actions should be false, that they should be histrionic, dramatized, etc. The hysteric, on the other hand, often insists that his feelings are real and genuine. It is we who feel that they are unreal. It is the hysteric who insists on the seriousness of his intention of committing suicide while we speak of a mere 'gesture' towards suicide. The hysteric complains that he is going to pieces. It is just in so far as we feel that he is not going to pieces, except in that he is pretending or making believe that he is, that we call him an hysteric and not a schizophrenic.

There may come a time in the life of such persons when they claim to have realized that they have been playing a part, that they have been pretending to themselves, that they have been trying to convince themselves of such and such, but that now they must confess that they have not succeeded. Yet this realization or confession can very well be a last effort to 'win' by an ultimate pretence, by once more pretending to have realized the last truth about themselves, and in so doing to elude its simple straightforward actual realization. One form of so-called hysterical 'acting out' appears to be based on a frantic desire to make their pretences real. Yet, as remarked above, even when such a person speaks and acts in a psychotic way, we still retain our reservations. Somehow we are convinced that not all people who act in a psychotic way are 'true' schizophrenics, or 'true' manics, or 'true' melancholics, although the 'true' schizophrenic is not always

easily distinguishable from the person we feel can dramatize himself into a counterfeit madness, because the schizophrenic is himself a pastmaster at pretence. The act of pretence itself, if carried to such desperate limits, has some title to be regarded as mad in itself.

We may feel not only that it is a mad thing to do to pretend to oneself as well as to others that one is mad, but that one's reasons for wanting to do such a thing under ordinary circumstances would have to be pretty mad in themselves. A state of psychosis may not be far away when the person begins quite deliberately to drive himself crazy, or, at any rate, to make the systematic and desperate attempt not to be himself, to escape from himself, to play at not being there, to be anonymous, or incognito, to be somebody else, to be dead, to be nobody in the sense of having no body, and so on.

The hysteric, Winnicott has suggested, is 'trying to get to a madness'. But the elusion to which the hysteric is self-condemned is still present. Madness indeed seems to be sought by some hysterics as a way out of the elusiveness of everything. Madness would be something definite, a point of arrival, a relief. But although the hysteric may succeed in getting a certificate of insanity, it remains a counterfeit, a fraud, which is certainly tragic enough. The counterfeit can engulf the person's life as much as the 'real thing'. But 'real' madness eludes him, as much as 'real' sanity.

Not all who would, can be psychotic.

CHAPTER IV

Masturbation

Persons in all cultures are governed in their actions by an intricate web of injunctions about whose bodies of what sex their own bodies should come into contact with.

In our society, physical intimacy is sanctioned between parents (more so the mother) and very young children, and between 'consenting' adults of different sexes, preferably if they have a 'personal' relationship in addition.

The ideal, held by some, is that a human being, from life to death, should have a 'sexual' relationship with only one person, that this person should not be of the same sex; he or she should not be too much older or younger, should not be closely biologically linked, etc., etc.

It is generally thought that children should not get too bodily excited with adults, that they should not 'play' at exciting each other too much, and that it is better for them not to see or hear adults getting physically passionate with each other.

It is generally thought to be more 'normal' to imagine certain parts of two bodies in relation than others. There are endemic injunctions against penis-mouth, clitoris-mouth, anus-mouth, penis-anus, hand-anus connexions, and so on.

There have always been a minority who claim not to be very interested in their own bodies or the bodies of other human beings at least as sources of fun, and some people find their own bodies, and/or the bodies of others, and/or the thought of two

human beings in bodily contact, quite disgusting. Many people find the thought of physical intimacy with others of the same sex frightens and/or horrifies them: some feel that if two people of the same sex, especially two men, engage in physical intercourse, they are criminals: many people are very frightened at the thought of any two bodies together, and are especially frightened at penetration of one body by another. To others, life would be meaningless without genital sexual love and consummation, while to others these bodily bonds between man and woman in phantasy, imagination, and reality constitute the essence of human bondage.

Masturbation is a term used variously to denote a child's action of exciting itself on a rocking-horse, or two lovers who stimulate their bodies by pressing themselves together, or by exciting highly erotogenic parts by hand friction, etc.

I wish to restrict the following remarks to acts of self-induced bodily excitement in relation to an imagined other(s).

What is of interest here is that the person participates with *real* bodily excitement in imaginary experiences. To do this seems to hold, for some people, a fascination mixed with horror, quite specific to itself.

A boy or adolescent becomes physically excited at the perception of 'attractive' girls, or at women he conjures up imaginatively. In our culture, desire to have real intercourse is often not felt in adolescence as much as the desire to have imaginary intercourse, but with real bodily excitement, orgasm, and relaxation.

It is very striking how repeated bodily excitement with imaginary others so often entails phantasies that the body will become rotten, diseased, wasted, 'doomed' in some way: perhaps undergo brainsoftening or develop fits, etc. Phantasies of this order are usually attributed to 'guilt', but what does 'guilt' mean here? Why does not everyone who feels guilty develop these hypochondriacal phantasies, and the self-consciousness (heightened awareness of the self as object for the other) that is frequently associated? These phantasies of the body beginning to

rot away, of an early death, and betrayal of the secret through the eyes, complexion, the walk, or from a smell, etc., seem to be quite endemic in our culture.[1]

Even textbooks of medicine and psychiatry until quite recently warned of profound dangers to health, even to life, if a person induced a real orgasm in himself or herself through imagined physical relationships. Masturbation used to be regarded as the cause of epilepsy and of mental illness. In our more 'enlightened' times it still tends to be regarded vaguely as a 'symptom', especially in adults, or, at least, as a 'sign of immaturity'.

Let us take a closer look at a little of what is involved existentially and phenomenologically.

The awareness the masturbator has of his body is complicated by the fact that his body has been seduced from real action into participation in an imaginary situation in which, however, a *real* orgasm has been necessary to bring the imaginary situation to a close. Now the person takes himself into the physical presence of others. He has to reorientate himself to their unaccustomed 'otherness'. He experiences a startling discrepancy between his body as a public event, and his body as a private experience. The imagined physical intimacy to which he may be an addict in solitude is disconfirmed by the 'distance' between him and the others in real relatedness. The ease with which distance is closed in consummation reached in imagination is contrasted to the obstacles that crop up in reality. Through repeated acts of self-induced orgasm the body develops a different 'identity' – that is, a different set of tensions and excitements from that which the person may feel he can afford to reveal in relation to the actual others. The body-in-relation-to the actual others is in some senses an instrument for dealing with others. But the body as used in the act of masturbation is employed with the express intention of gaining satisfaction by eliminating the problems of coping with other real bodies. The reality of the other is temporarily negated.

[1] 'In India, masturbation is a sin against body and spirit, leading to neurosis and hypochondria: in Japan, it is considered a solitary pastime, almost like smoking' (Koestler, 1960, p. 230).

The other is rendered unnecessary. The 'real' other person who is the object of desire becomes merely the shadow of the imagined other. This is one of the problems that the masturbator runs into: his imagination casts its shadow over him as it does over the others.

If imagination can induce real physical excitement, this physical excitement is still subtly different from the excitement in real relationship. What can happen is that the imagination and reality have to be kept apart. The body, accustomed to easy excitement and relaxation in masturbation, becomes difficult to handle as an instrument for real relations. The habitual masturbator often feels awkward, gauche, self-conscious, fearful that he will get inappropriately worked up in the real presence of others. He is afraid that his body will be out of his control if his masturbatory images 'come into his mind' when he is with others – he is afraid that his body will start reacting as he has trained it to do 'in' imagination. In this, there may be a wide difference between how his body feels to him, and how it appears to another. But the physical fusion of imagination and reality in masturbation may lead him to fear that he will confuse them in a public situation.

Such intrusions from the private masturbation situation into the public realm entail the possibility that the real others fail to be adequately and veridically perceived in their otherness. Thus, if the masturbatory body-for-self, aroused in the first place in relation to imaginary others, starts to be evoked by the experience of real others; if the evocation of this 'other' body, that has been experienced in the intimacy of solitude, begins to happen to a significant extent, the way one has of experiencing one's own body in relation to the real physical presence of others is inevitably profoundly modified in all aspects. The man sees the woman coloured by his experience of her as imagined in intercourse with his excited single body. This masturbating experience of his real body and her imagined body is resonated in the real relation to her. He expects her to see *his* body in the light of how he feels it, and he expects her to realize the way he has imagined *her* in his masturbation.

Masturbation certainly is, or can be, more than an adolescent prodroma to 'the real thing'. Although possibly a relatively simple reaction to sheer frustration, it may also be an act in preference to a real relation.

Sartre (1952a) distinguished a 'good' and 'bad' use of masturbation, using, however, these terms cleansed from naïve moralism. An 'honest' masturbator will resort to masturbation for want of anything more actual. Sartre describes what he regards as a 'dishonest' or 'bad' use of masturbation in his discussion of Jean Genet.

> 'A masturbator by choice, Genet prefers his own caresses since the enjoyment received coincides with the enjoyment given, the moment of passivity with that of the greatest activity; he is at one and the same time this consciousness that clots (*caille*), and this hand which churns in agitation. Being, existence; faith, works; masochistic inertia and sadistic ferocity; petrification and liberty: at the moment of pleasure the two contradictory components of Genet coincide; he is the criminal who violates and the saint who lets himself be violated. The masturbator makes himself unreal – he brings about his own rerealization; he is very near to discovering the magic formula that will open the sluice gates.
>
> However, victim or executioner, caresser or caressed, these phantasms in the end will have to be reabsorbed into Narcissus; Narcissus fears men, their judgements, and their real presence; he wishes only to experience an aura of love for himself, he asks only to be slightly distanced from his own body, only for there to be a light coating of otherness over his flesh and over his thoughts. His personae are melting sweets; this lack of consistency reassures him and serves his sacrilegious designs: it caricatures love. The masturbator is enchanted at never being able to feel himself sufficiently another, and at producing for himself alone the diabolic appearance of a couple that fades away when one touches it. The failure of pleasure is the acid

pleasure of failure. Masturbation as a pure demonic act sustains in the heart of consciousness an appearance of appearance: masturbation is the derealization of the world and of the masturbator himself. But this man who is eaten up by his own dream knows surely enough that this dream is there only by virtue of his willing it; Divine (the other in some of Genet's masturbation phantasies) ceaselessly absorbs Genet into herself, and Genet ceaselessly absorbs Divine. However, by a reversal which brings ecstasy to a point of overflowing, this clear negation (*clair néant*) will provoke real events in the true world; the cause of the erection, the ejaculation, the damp stains on the bed-clothes is – the *imaginary*. In a single movement the masturbator captures the world to dissolve it and insert the order of the unreal into the universe; it is necessary that they *be* the images, since they *act*. No, the masturbation of Narcissus is not, as some misguidedly think, the little gallantry that one performs toward the evening, the nice, boyish compensation for a day's work: *it wills itself a crime*. Genet draws his pleasure from his nothingness: solitude, impotence, the unreal, evil, have produced, without recourse to being, *an event in the world*.'

(pp. 341–2)

For Narcissus, who relies on the image as the exquisitely fragile link between his divided selves, masturbation is the act of choice. For Genet, the other is conjured up only to be conjured away, together with himself, in his act of masturbation – and when the spell is ended, there remains only Genet, and yet it is only in virtue of these phantom homosexual essences, distilled into images, that Genet himself exists. 'I exist only through those who are nothing apart from the being they have through me.'

Here, we find ourselves making inroads to a level of elusiveness more radical than we have yet discovered. For in the evocation of the unreal presence of the other in imagination, that level of experience that has been termed phantasy is resonated. One finds, therefore, a blend of phantasy and the imaginary whereby

it no longer becomes possible to say when an act of masturbation begins or ends. The real blends into imagination, imagination sinks into phantasy, and phantasy becomes embodied in the real.

Consider this description by Ferenczi (1938) of a woman's sexuality. The activity and experiences of such a woman here described are a complex blend of phantasy and imagination, which are incarnated in the flesh. It is quite possible that this woman is *unable* to masturbate, but needs a real other to embody her phantasies. We need not take Ferenczi's account, incidentally, to be more than a description of a possible woman.

> 'The development of genital sexuality (in the woman) is characterized above all else by the displacement of erogenity from the clitoris (the female penis) to the cavity of the vagina. Psycho-analytic experience compels the assumption, however, that not alone the vagina but, in the manner of hysteria, other parts of the body as well are genitalized, in particular the nipple and the surrounding area . . . the partly abandoned male striving to return to the maternal womb is not altogether given up, at any rate in the psychic sphere, where it expresses itself as a phantasied identification in coitus with the penis-possessing male, and as the vaginal sensation of possessing a penis ("hollow penis"), as well as an identification on the part of the woman with the child that she harbours within her own body. Masculine aggressiveness turns into a passive pleasure in experiencing the sex act (masochism), which is explicable in part on the ground of very archaic instinctual forces (the death instinct of Freud), in part on that of the mechanism of identification with the conquering male. All these secondary recathexes of spatially remote and genetically superseded pleasure mechanisms in the female sex seem to have been instituted more or less by way of consolation for the loss of the penis.
>
> Of the transition on the part of the woman from (masculine) activity to passivity one may form the following general idea; the genitality of the female penis is absorbed regressively into

the whole body and into the whole ego of the woman, out of which – amphimictically, as we believe – it had arisen, so that a secondary narcissism becomes her portion; on the erotic side, therefore, she becomes again more like a child who wants to be loved, and is thus a being who still clings *in toto* to the fiction of existence in the mother's womb. In this way she can then easily identify herself with the child in her own body (or with the penis as its symbol) and make the transition from the transitive to the intransitive, from active penetration to passivity. The secondary genitalization of the female body also explains her greater proneness to conversion hysteria.

To observe the genital development of the female is to obtain the impression that on the occasion of the first sexual intercourse this development is still quite uncompleted. The first attempts at coitus are so to speak only acts of rape in which even blood must flow. It is only later that the woman learns to experience the sex act passively, and later still to feel it as pleasurable or even to take an active part in it. Indeed, in the individual sex act the initial defence is repeated in the form of a muscular resistance on the part of the narrowed vagina; it is only later that the vagina becomes lubricated and easy of entrance, and only later still that there occur the contractions which seem to have as their purpose the aspiration of the semen and the incorporation of the penis – the latter certainly an intended castration as well. These observations, together with certain phylogenetic considerations which will occupy us more fully later, suggested to me the conception that one phase of the warfare between the sexes is here repeated individually – a phase in which the woman comes off second best, since she cedes to the man the privilege of penetrating the mother's body in a real sense, while she herself contents herself with phantasy-like substitutes, and particularly with harbouring the child whose fortune she shares. At all events, according to the psycho-analytic observations of Groddeck, there is vouchsafed to the female, even in childbirth and hidden behind the

painfulness of labour, a meed of pleasure which is denied to the male sex' (pp. 24–6).

In this description, the woman's own bodily experiences hardly occur at all as objects of apperception. She is almost completely alienated from her own real feminine bodily experiences; she is 'lost' in phantasy, and in the imaginary. But one should not confuse these two categories, even if they are somewhat confused in her.

It would not be accurate to say, for instance, that she 'imagines' that she has a penis. She might be shocked at the thought, and never have dared imagine such a thing in her life. It would be more true to say that 'in phantasy' she is a man, and 'in imagination' she is a woman. There is a sense that she has never 'really' discovered her own body. By imagining herself to be a woman, and acting as though she were a woman, she is trying to become a woman. She is using her imagination and her flesh to extricate herself from phantasy.

Ferenczi's woman, however, has become a stranger to her own real feminine body experience by being lost in her phantasy. If her phantasy of having a penis becomes sufficiently 'real', she will imagine not that she has a penis, but that she has *not* got one. Imagination can be used in such instances to imagine a reality which has been lost. It is a form of counterfeit. She does not necessarily *know* that what she experiences is phantasy. Her phantasy body, unrecognized as such, casts a veil over her 'own' body.

What is true of this woman's experience of herself holds also of course for her experience of the man. As little as she is real, as little is she able to recognize the reality of the man, so that the act of intercourse is, in a sense, an act of masturbation for her.

This points to another sense in which masturbation may be 'honest' or 'dishonest' (cf. Sartre above). Although masturbation may be dishonest in so far as it is a negation of the real, the 'real' can be used dishonestly to mask the secret play of phantasy and

imagination. If masturbation counterfeits intercourse, intercourse can be a counterfeit of masturbation. Intercourse may merely mask the essentially masturbatory nature of the act. The solitude of masturbation can give the individual the opportunity to discover what his position 'really' is, and what his desires 'really' are.

For some individuals, masturbation can be the most honest act in their lives.

CHAPTER V

The counterpoint of experience

Experience as lived is always a blend of phantasy, imagination, dream, of extraordinary complexity, and a constant destructuring–restructuring of their synthetic unity.

Dostoevsky and Jean Genet are two of the greatest masters in the exploration of the blending, mergence, and at times confusion, of dreams, imagination, phantasy, and their derealization–rerealization.[1]

The following passage is from *Our Lady of the Flowers* (Genet, 1957a).

> 'Something different, a kind of feeling of power, sprang up (in the vegetal, germinative sense) in Divine. She thought she had been virilized. A wild hope made her strong and husky and vigorous. She felt muscles growing, and felt herself emerging from a rock carved by Michael Angelo in the form of a slave. Without moving a muscle, without straining herself, she struggled internally just as Laocoön seizes the monster and twists it. Then, bolder still, she wanted to box, with her arms and legs of flesh, but she quickly got knocked about on the boulevard, for she judged and willed her movements not in accordance with their combative efficiency but rather in accordance with an aesthetic that would have made of her a hoodlum of a more or less gallant stripe. Her movements, particularly a

[1] For a recent profound study of this area see *Portrait of a Man Unknown* by Nathalie Sarraute (1960).

hitching of the belt and her guard position, were meant, whatever the cost, at the cost of victory itself, to make of her not the boxer Divine, but a certain admired boxer, and at times several fine boxers rolled into one. She tried male gestures, which are rarely the gestures of males. She whistled, put her hands into her pockets, and this whole performance was carried out so unskilfully that in the course of a single evening she seemed to be four or five characters at the same time. She thereby acquired the richness of a multiple personality. She ran from boy to girl, and the transitions from one to the other – because the attitude was a new one – were made stumblingly. She would hop after the boy on one foot. She would always begin her Big Scatterbrain gestures, then, suddenly remembering that she was supposed to show she was virile so as to captivate the murderer, she would end by burlesquing them, and this double formula enveloped her in strangeness, made her a timid clown in plain dress, a sort of embittered swish. Finally, to crown her metamorphosis from female into tough male, she imagined a man to man friendship which would link her with one of those faultless pimps whose gestures could not be regarded as ambiguous. And to be on the safe side, she invented Marchetti. It was a simple matter to choose a physique for him, for she possessed in her secret, lovely-girl's imagination, for a night's pleasure, a stock of thighs, arms, torsos, faces, hair, teeth, necks and knees, and she knew how to assemble them so as to make of them a live man to whom she loaned a soul – which was always the same one for each of her constructions: the one she would have liked to have herself' (p. 89).

Here, Genet is describing a *man* whom he calls 'Divine' and refers to as 'she', since 'in phantasy' this is how he experiences himself. At one point, 'she' begins 'in a vegetal, germinative sense' to feel a new virility within 'her'. 'She' does not 'imagine' this: it happens to 'her' – but it does not go very far: as this change of sex in phantasy peters out, 'she' pretends (literally: stretches out

ahead of herself to grasp something in anticipation) that 'she' is a man. 'She' uses 'her' imagination, gestures, actions, to regain by a magical metamorphosis 'her' lost masculinity. But 'she' is trying to make ice by boiling water.

Dostoevsky's genius is unmistakable in his handling of the merging of dreams, phantasy, imagination, and reality. All his novels explicitly reveal or openly imply his characters' simultaneous participation in the world in these modalities. It is not easy to demonstrate this succinctly, but we shall try to do so, by considering Dostoevsky's (1951) account of Raskolnikov at the beginning of *Crime and Punishment*. Dream, phantasy, imagination, reality, up to and including the murder are handled with complete mastery.

The modality of participation in the world denoted by 'phantasy' in contrast to 'imagination' is rendered particularly clearly in the person of Raskolnikov. In him, we see a man 'acting out' a phantasy of which he is quite unaware.

The day before he murders the old woman, 'Raskolnikov dreamed a terrible dream' (p. 72 et seq.). This is a long, intricate, vivid dream. We shall have to abridge it drastically.

> '. . . He dreamed of the time when he was a child and when they still lived in their little provincial town. He was a boy of seven. It was a holiday, late in the afternoon, and he was out for a walk in the country with his father.'

He dreamt his father and he were walking along a road to a cemetery, where were the graves of his grandmother and a brother who had died at the age of six months, and whom Raskolnikov could not remember. They were passing a pub; he was holding his father's hand and gazing fearfully at the pub, which was associated with scenes of great drunkenness and violence. In front of the pub there was a large cart such as would usually be pulled by a large drayhorse . . .

'. . . but now, curiously enough, some peasant's small, lean, greyish-brown mare was harnessed to one of these huge carts, the sort of poor old nag which – he had seen it so often – found it very hard to draw quite an ordinary cart with wood or hay piled on top of it, especially when the cart was stuck in the mud or in a rut, and every time that happened, the peasant flogged her so brutally, so brutally, sometimes even across the eyes and muzzle, and he felt so sorry, so sorry for the poor old horse that he almost burst into tears, and his mother always used to take him away from the window. But now in front of the pub pandemonium suddenly broke loose: a crowd of blind drunk big peasants in red and blue shirts with their coats thrown over their shoulders came out of the pub, yelling and singing and strumming their balalaikas. "Come on, get on my cart!" shouted one of them, quite a young peasant with a terribly thick neck and a very red, beefy face. "I'll drive you all home! Get in!" '

But the old nag is quite unequal to the task imposed on her. The peasants find this a great joke:

'. . . People were laughing, and indeed, how could they help laughing? The mare was all skin and bones, and there she was supposed to drag such a heavy load at a gallop! Two young lads in the cart at once took a whip each and got ready to help Mikolka.'

They begin to flog her.

' "Daddy! Daddy!" he cried to his father. "Daddy, look what they are doing! Daddy, they're beating the poor little horse!"

"Come along, come along, son," said his father. "They're drunk. Having fun, the fools. Come along and don't look," and he tried to take him away, but he tore himself out of his father's

hands and, hardly realizing what he was doing, ran to the old horse. But the poor old mare was already in a very bad state. She was gasping for breath, standing still, pulling at the cart again, and almost collapsing in the road.

"Flog her to death!" shouted Mikolka. "I don't mind. I'm going to flog her to death myself!" '

The joke becomes more hilarious, as Mikolka's fury mounts. He shouts that she is his property.

' "I'll damn well do what I like with her! Come on, there's plenty of room. Come on, all of you! I'm going to make her gallop if it's the last thing I do!" '

Only the young Raskolnikov seems to feel any concern for the nag.

'He ran beside the old mare, he ran in front of her, he saw her being whipped across her eyes, across the very eyes! He was crying. His heart heaved. Tears rolled down his cheeks. One of the men who were flogging the horse grazed his face with the whip, but he felt nothing. Wringing his hands and screaming, he rushed up to the old man with the grey beard who was shaking his head and condemning it all. A woman took him by the hand and tried to lead him away, but he freed himself and ran back to the poor old horse, which seemed to be at the last gasp, but started kicking once more.

"Oh, to hell with you!" shouted Mikolka furiously, and, throwing down his whip, he bent down and dragged out a long thick shaft from the bottom of the cart. Taking hold of it by one end with both hands, he swung it with an effort over the grey-brown mare.

"He'll strike her dead!" they shouted all round. "He'll kill her!"

"My property!" shouted Mikolka, and let fall the shaft with all his might. There was the sound of a heavy thud.

"Flog her! Flog her! Why have you stopped?" Shouts were heard in the crowd.

And Mikolka swung the shaft another time, and another terrific blow fell across the back of the unhappy mare. She subsided on her haunches, but presently was on her feet again, pulling, pulling with all her remaining strength first on one side and then on another, trying to move the cart. But they were belabouring her from every side with six whips, and the shaft was raised again and fell for the third and then for the fourth time, slowly and with terrific force. Mikolka was furious because he had not been able to kill her with one blow.

"Alive and kicking!" they shouted on all sides.

"Bet she'll fall down any minute now, lads," shouted a sportsman in the crowd. "She's about finished!"

"Why don't you strike her with an axe? Despatch her at once!" a third one shouted.

"Oh, damn her! Make way!" Mikolka yelled furiously and, throwing down the shaft, he once more bent down in the cart and pulled out an iron bar. "Mind!" he shouted, swinging it with all his might over the poor old horse. The bar came down with a crash; the old mare swayed, subsided, and was about to give another pull at the cart when the bar once again descended on her back with terrific force, and she collapsed on the ground as though her four legs had given way from under her all at once.

"Finish her off!" Mikolka shouted, jumping down from the cart, blind with rage.

A few young men, also red-faced and drunk, seized whatever they could lay their hands on – whips, sticks, the shaft – and ran to the dying mare. Mikolka stood on one side and started raining blows across her back with the iron bar without bothering to see where the blows were falling. The mare stretched out her head, heaved a deep sigh, and died.

"Settled her!" they shouted in the crowd.

"Why didn't she gallop?"

"My property!" shouted Mikolka, iron bar in hand and with bloodshot eyes. He stood there as though he were sorry he had nothing more to flog.

"Aye, you ain't got the fear of God in you after all," many voices were already shouting in the crowd.

"But by now the poor little boy was beside himself. He pushed his way through the crowd to the grey-brown mare, put his arms round her dead, bloodstained muzzle, and kissed her, kissed her on the eyes, on the lips . . . Then suddenly jumped to his feet and rushed in a rage at Mikolka with his little fists. But just then his father, who had been running after him, caught hold of him at last and carried him out of the crowd.

"Come along, son, come along," he said to him. "Let's go home."

"Daddy, why – why did they kill the poor little horse?" he whimpered, but suddenly his breath failed him and the words came in shrieks from his panting breast.

"They're drunk," said his father. "Playing the fool. It's not our business. Come along!"

He put his arms round his father, but his chest tightened and he felt choked. He tried to draw a breath, to cry out and – woke up.

Raskolnikov woke up in a cold sweat, his hair wet with perspiration, gasping for breath, and he raised himself in terror.

"Thank God it was only a dream!" he said, sitting down under a tree and drawing deep breaths. "But what's the matter with me? These are not the symptoms of a fever, are they? What a horrible dream!"

Every bone in his body seemed to ache; his soul was in confusion and darkness. He put his elbows on his knees and propped his head on his hands.

"Good God!" he cried, "Is it possible that I will really take a

hatchet, hit her on the head with it, crack her skull, slither about in warm, sticky blood, break the lock, steal and shake with fear, hide myself all covered in blood and with the hatchet – Good God! Is it possible?' "

It is clear from Raskolnikov's first experience on waking that his own body had somehow been most intimately compromised by this dream. He awoke in terror as though it was *he* who had been flogged to death, and immediately recalls with horror his intention to kill the old woman by hitting her on the head in a very similar way to the striking of the old nag.

From these data alone, it seems that Raskolnikov's experience of his 'own' body is in terms of a physical identification with both the old nag and the old woman. (Note the site of the incident: close to the cemetery wherein are the graves of his grandmother and younger brother.) He does not '*imagine*' himself to be an old nag or an old woman. On the contrary, 'in his imagination' he is as far as possible from the situation in which he participates in his dream or in his phantasy. While in his dream he is a little boy empathizing with an old nag, while in phantasy his own body participates in the death of an old nag and old woman, 'he' – as we learn later – is imagining himself to be Napoleon! He has almost completely lost his own true possibilities, 'lost' between (i) his imagination, where he thinks of himself as Napoleon, and (ii) his dream, where he is a little boy, and (iii) his phantasy, where he is a beaten old mare or an old woman about to die.

Raskolnikov is aware of his dream, and of his intention to murder the old money-lender woman, but he realizes neither a link between Mikolka and the other ruthlessly violent drunken peasants, and himself, nor a link between the old mare and the old woman. Finally, and this is the crucial point, he connects none of this with his 'own' feelings towards his mother.[1]

When he finally 'knows' that the old woman will be murdered tomorrow, he feels himself like a man sentenced to death. That is,

[1] See Chapter XIII.

on the level of his phantasy, *he* is the victim, whereas 'in imagination', and 'in reality', he is to be the executioner.

Thus, just before he enters the gates of the old woman's flat to kill her, he remarks about his own thoughts: 'It's like that, I suppose, that the thoughts of those who are led to execution cling to everything they see on the way . . .' That is, in phantasy, he is more the victim being led to execution than the executioner.

Just before the old woman opens her door he suddenly loses the feel of his own body. That is, it appears that in order to murder this old woman, his action-in-phantasy is to re-project 'the old nag' onto the person of the money-lender who 'in reality' means nothing to him at all.

Raskolnikov may have murdered the old woman 'to be Napoleon', 'for money', or just 'for spite' as he later speculates, but we have before us, I think, the disclosure of a phantasy, a modality of action and experience, *a physical dream*, in which he is submerged and contained. Thus in bondage, he is quite estranged (with, however, transitory moments of emergence) from participation in the 'real' world as a young man in his 'own' person. While he is in this state, the genuine recognition of who the other is remains unavailable to him.

In this novel, in which the theme of the prostitute is deeply explored, the old woman is yet another *pro*-stitute, in the sense of one who stands for another. Dostoevsky makes clear that Raskolnikov had conceived a violent aversion to her, 'at once, though he knew nothing about her'. The 'old woman' and her sister were experienced so much in the modality of phantasy that their real otherness hardly registered on Raskolnikov. Any awareness, however, of the way he was '*phantastisizing*' them, rather than *perceiving* them 'in their own light' was most fugitive. He was in a sense captive 'within' his phantasy. No wonder he felt stifled.

CHAPTER VI

The coldness of death. The phenomenology of a puerperal psychosis

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The following is an account of the strange experiences of a woman shortly after the birth of her third child.

I present this account primarily to illustrate the relevance of the foregoing considerations to an understanding of psychosis. For, during the several months of this story the blend of phantasy and dream, imagination and reality, constituted a puerperal psychosis which was, clinically speaking, not particularly unusual.

Although her doctor had been unable to find any organic illness, Mrs. A was still unable to get up from bed three weeks after her third baby had been born. After her two previous pregnancies she had felt something of the same exhaustion, a complete disinclination to do anything, and no interest in the familiar people and things of her life.

One night 'a terrible storm' raged in her head. Sails seemed to crackle and tear in the wind. Although this may have been in a dream, retrospectively she was convinced that she had not slept for a moment. When her husband came home the following day from a business trip, she accused him of having ruined her by her repeated pregnancies and said he was callous and cruel. She had never expressed any feelings of this kind before. She was completely exhausted and was unable to carry on with the care of the

baby, or in any way look after the other two children. The doctor was called and, although he could find no physical signs, diagnosed cystitis and prescribed pills. She did not take these pills until the following night, because she was afraid that they might not cure her, or even that in her state they might do her harm. This attitude made those about her think for the first time that she was 'mental'. However, in the evening she got up and behaved quite normally when friends came round, but she had a distinct though indescribable feeling of being 'different', which she attributed to her toxic condition. She spent another awful night with a violent storm inside her, with, again, sails flapping in her head, and, in addition, with a peculiar sense of her thoughts running down and coming to a standstill. When she awoke from a fitful sleep she no longer felt that she had a fever as she had done. A 'realization' swept over her that nothing had anything to do with her – she was no longer in 'that' world. The room and the baby in the cot suddenly appeared small and far away 'as though seen through the wrong end of a telescope'. She felt completely unconcerned. She was 'absolutely and completely emotionless'. As she lay in this state peculiar sensations developed in her tongue. It seemed paralysed and twisted. She looked at her tongue in a mirror: it looked normal but the discrepancy between how it felt and how it looked frightened her. By mid-morning she was beginning to think she was poisoned and that the poison was coursing through her blood stream. She took her temperature. The fact that it was normal was because her body was not reacting to the poison. The idea of a poison in her blood persisted throughout the whole course of her illness and found expression in various dreams that she had in the transitional period when she was half in and half out of her state of 'non-reaction'. She believed at first that the poison came from a germ in her bladder: some weeks later she developed a cold and then came to believe that the second germ, the cold germ, had killed the first one. Later still she thought that the poison came from her bowels, perhaps from intestinal worms. There was no one word that served to convey

entirely to her satisfaction what she felt she had inside her – it was a germ – worm – 'little beast' that was poisoning her and causing her body to decay. She said she was in 'the coldness of death'. The extremities of her limbs were cold: there was a weight in her arms and legs. It was an enormous effort to make the slightest movement. (However, her actual movements were only slightly retarded.) Her chest was empty. In this state near death she became greatly concerned for the doctors who would get into terrible trouble after her death for misdiagnosing her case. The doctors were tragically deluded by the absence of physical signs of near death. The absence of such signs was the mark of her absolutely unique condition. Because her body was in a state of 'non-reaction', it was entirely logical that the doctors should find absolutely no abnormality. She could hardly blame them for their tragically mistaken conclusions; she wished that both she and the doctors should be correct, but she was afraid that that was impossible. When she had died the poison lying in her body would give the impression that she had committed suicide, but when the full facts came to light she might be just that unique case that could well revolutionize the whole of medical science. Then the doctors who had been in attendance upon her would suffer extreme disgrace. Although she complained of complete exhaustion she was prepared to talk about her dying state indefinitely.

To her, her skin had a dying pallor, her hands were unnaturally blue – almost black – her heart might stop at any moment, her bones felt twisted and in a powder: her flesh was decaying. After her recovery she described this time as follows:

> 'One day, about the middle of March, I became conscious of the dreadful coldness in my legs but at the same time noticed that my feet were warm. This didn't make sense to me in the light of my own hypothesis and it made me think. I got no inspiration, however, but some days later, while sitting thinking of nothing in particular, I thought of the fact that any illness

sufficiently serious to make one "start" to die would first of all prostrate the person regardless of the strength of that person's will-power. I felt very bucked at this idea, but nevertheless needed the assurance of a doctor that it was a correct conclusion, and it didn't really afford me much relief as there was still, in my mind, far too much to counterbalance it and I was still incapable of holding on to thoughts for any length of time. Shortly after that I saw the ridiculousness of my idea of a condition of "starting to die", and realized that I was talking of a dying state synonymous with stopping reacting to a fever which would result in death in a matter of hours (so I presumed). I still felt very ill, as if I had pneumonia and was made to walk about with it, especially when made to go outside, and felt my heartbeat very, very weak and my respiration very shallow and my hands going blue at times other than when put in water. I got slight agitation and a feeling of losing my grip and one night in bed got a sudden thought that I was indeed in a state of unreality and that I was about to come out of it, and panicked at the thought of coming out of it – felt overwhelmed and weak. I curled up, decided to hold on to it, and the feeling passed.

Shortly after that I found the psychological explanation for the blueness in my hands, and a week later for the action of splashing water on my hands to induce the blueness and the necessity to apply soap to make a lather. I felt very well that night, could breathe deeply, felt warm all over and felt my pulse strong. The following morning, I felt happy at the prospect of another day and didn't consider the possibility of dying during it, but had twinges of pain all over my body, particularly in my wrists and my head. The following day again I was back where I started, felt all my symptoms most acutely, and was thoroughly convinced that my own diagnosis was the correct one. This state of mind continued for a week during which my efforts to the doctors to prove myself correct were as strong as ever. At the end of that week I went out for the first week-end,

not because I felt any better, but because I couldn't keep putting my girl-friend off any longer, and I was thoroughly fed up with my position in the hospital and felt I couldn't be worse. While out, I found that I felt normal in the presence of people, no longer felt a barrier between me and them, and again couldn't reconcile the fact with my idea of being in a dying state. Nevertheless, I still felt death to be imminent all the time and spent the rest of the week striving to prove my point. I decided myself to go out for the next week-end, as I was absolutely fed up with my surroundings and with the psychiatrist and felt agitated and frightened with the goings-on in the ward and wanted to escape from it all. During that week-end I was able to reassure myself each time I panicked within myself, all the arguments against my own hypothesis occurred to me at the same time and I felt that the explanation for the blueness in my hands was really a true and correct one. Therefore when, on my return to the hospital, the psychiatrist suggested that I become an outpatient I was very pleased, though I still felt all my symptoms except the coldness in my legs, and I was surprised to find that I could have an emotion of pleasure. I got an intense urge to escape from the drabness of my surroundings in the hospital: I was feeling very ill at ease (*sic*) in the ward in the knowledge of the uncertainty of the patients' behaviour. Even if I did feel very ill, I thought it pleasanter to be so in the more pleasant environment of a dwellinghouse with normal people. I found myself responding to music and appreciating cartoons and anything humorous and enjoying reading and not necessarily medical articles – I had become definitely positive in thought. Nevertheless, I got frequent panics and while in them couldn't see beyond my feelings of the moment, which were those of collapsing and dying, but when it came time for me to make the journey to the hospital alone I was able to put my trust in God and derived absolute confidence from the psychiatrist's faith in my ability to do this, and was determined not to let him or myself down. I became more and more

optimistic and then, one morning, had a flash of realization of the doctors' ability to diagnose a dying state regardless of what caused it, and with that I saw clearly that I had been deluded and knew that I was so no longer. After that, each day brought an improvement, and I became less and less apathetic and began to desire to go home to see my husband and children. I was completely disinterested in my symptoms and was able to see very clearly what had happened to me and how it had all come about.'

The 'psychological' explanation of the blue-blackness of her hands occurred as a 'flash' of 'realization' – that her hands were her second baby, over whose blue-black face she had once splashed cold water when it was in the midst of a breath-holding attack.

At this time she had numerous 'flashes' when she emerged briefly from what she called 'the tapestry of symbols' in which her whole body was enveloped. Thus she had a sudden 'realization' as she lay awake at night anxiously listening for her next heartbeat, that her heart *was* a foetus, whose heart was beating faintly and rapidly, and in the next four weeks she 'realized' on different occasions that her twisted tongue *was* her father's tongue after he had had a stroke: her skin and chest were those of her brother as she watched him die of tuberculosis, etc. She emerged in these 'realizations' from her 'state of unreality' (these are her terms) but sometimes lapsed into her unreal state despite herself. Sometimes, as she writes above, she desperately clutched at her 'unreality', and the whiff of reality passed by. At this time she had a number of dreams that seemed to be dealing with this issue.

For instance, in one dream she was cornered by a man who was going to assault her. There seemed no escape. She was at her wits' end, when, still in the dream, she tried to escape into a waking consciousness, but she continued to be cornered, in fact it was now worse because it was real, so she escaped back into dreaming that 'it was only a dream anyway'. In another dream she was inside a dark house looking out of a doorway across which was laid a

black umbrella. In the dream she felt that inside was unreality and outside was reality, but she was barred from getting outside because of the umbrella. A third dream, just after she had finally emerged from her psychotic state, had the following elements: she was outside looking at a large aeroplane: in the doorway of the aeroplane stood a doctor who embodied elements of various people including myself. This time she had a conviction that outside was reality and inside was unreality. She wanted to get inside into unreality, back into her madness, but the doctor barred her way. She summarized her illness by saying, 'I seem to have been living in a metaphorical state. I wove a tapestry of symbols and have been living in it.'

This account of this woman's experience during her puerperal psychosis demonstrates, I think, the almost complete inadequacy of clinical psychiatric terminology, in both its descriptive and theoretical respects. Confronted with this woman's experience, can there be any doubt that the language of description is loose and careless to the point of puerility? Unless one can describe, one cannot explain.

One sees here the naked actuality of the complexity of experiences that those psychiatrists and psycho-analysts struggle with who do not actually water down the phenomenological basis for the concept of the unconscious. While one may find much of psychiatric and psycho-analytic theory unsatisfactory, any criticism of theory can only be made on behalf of experience, not in order to deny the experience with which the theory attempts to come to terms. The following description is only the first step in a phenomenological anlysis.

What appeared to be happening in Mrs. A's case was that a phantasy mode of experiencing herself was asserting itself, while her bonds with her husband, children, and friends, on that level which we regard as 'real', ceased to mean anything to her. However, in another sense of the term 'real', her experiences did not *feel un*real. She did not complain at any time during her psychosis that she experienced her body, or other people, in an

unreal way. It was only when she was coming out of her psychotic state that retrospectively she 'realized' that she had been living in a state of 'unreality', as she put it. It appears that our habitual sense of being linked with others, of being ourselves 'connected', compounded of common-sense, flesh-and-blood 'reality', requires the support of a phantasy modality of which we are unaware. If we become aware of the content of this phantasy it is not usually experienced as unreal. 'Real' in contrast to 'unreal' is more a quality of phantasy than of imagination or of common-sense experience. Being in love, for instance, may be an experience largely in a phantasy mode, and nothing may be more vivid or real.

There is much in the foregoing that can at present only be described, for which there is no available explanation. An explanation is often a link between two or more items within a total description. We either have not got the items of description, or the linkages between different aspects of the available data have not 'clicked'. At the beginning of her psychosis, Mrs. A lost a sense of any personal connexion or bond between herself and the world. She seemed to become uncoupled from things, and she and the world drifted apart. This experience of detachment was not the consequence, as far as I could assess, of any intention on her part: and even were she to have unconsciously intended to withdraw from the world, how did it happen to her that she underwent this particular form of alienation and estrangement, whereas most people who wish intensely to get away from themselves and from the world *cannot* do so?

In the following two columns, I list some of the major links (to use a term of Bion) that suddenly occurred in her 'flashes' of realization. These 'links' occurred entirely spontaneously. They were as complete a surprise to me as they were to her. This material is therefore, I believe, of great value, because these links occurred to her, they *happened* to her, without any suggestions or interpretations remotely resembling them coming from anyone else.

Her tongue (felt as twisted, but seen as normal)	*was*	her father's tongue when he had a series of strokes that ended his life.
Her chest (felt as empty) and her skin (seen as yellow)	*were*	her brother's chest and skin on his deathbed.
Her hand (seen as blue-black)	*was*	her baby's head in a breath-holding attack.
Her heart	*was*	her baby during her last pregnancy when there had been anxiety about something going wrong.
Her bones	*were*	the bones of her mother, who had been crippled with rheumatoid arthritis since the patient's early childhood.

All these 'internal objects' belonged to the most significant others in her life, who were all dead, with the exception of the baby (who nearly died), all of whom she had intensely loved and hated.

In her psychosis nothing was more real to her than that she was in a dying state, and would die like her father, mother, or brother. But nothing was less real to her than the *links between* her tongue, chest, heart, hands, bones, with, generally, her own body experienced as dying, and with her father, mother, brother, or baby.

Jung has, of course, more than anyone else, succeeded in linking such modern psychotic experience with human experiences in other times and places. There is no doubt about these parallels.

Compare this woman's experience in its sequence (a howling storm in the night, infection by an invisible 'beastie'-worm-germ, in the genital area, the destruction of the experience of being alive, and a sense of being moribund) with one of Blake's poems.

O Rose, thou art sick!
The invisible worm
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm,

Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy,
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

(1927, p. 71)

The parallelism is so nearly complete as to be uncanny.

What is the relation of the 'symbolism' of Blake's poem with the 'tapestry of symbols' that Mrs. A's body had become? Is a symbol that whereby different modalities of experience – imagination and phantasy in Blake's poem, flesh and phantasy in Mrs. A's body – are fused together?

Blake's position seems to me to have been this. Single 'vision' (one modality of experience) is death. This is what most people regard as sanity. At least a two-fold vision is necessary before the full world of delight can even be glimpsed. Mrs. A's psychosis was a single vision. For practical purposes she was insane, but from an ultimate point of view she was no more subsane, no more moribund than we are most of the time *without* realizing it. Her sanity returned with a two-fold vision that frightened her because it was too much, but which she finally sustained. But none of us wishes to bear too much reality: to wake up, for instance, at 3 a.m. and realize that we have been under the delusion of being alive.

PART TWO

Forms of Interpersonal Action

CHAPTER VII

Identity and complementarity

Rabbi Kabia (in Roman captivity) to his favourite pupil, Simeon ben Yochai: 'My son, more than a calf wishes to suck, does the cow yearn to suckle.'

In a previous study of certain types of self-division (Laing, 1960) and in the foregoing account of different ways self experiences and acts in imagination, dream, and phantasy, it was often necessary to extend our account explicitly or by implication to a whole 'nexus' of other selves, 'real' or conjured up. We shall now try to bring 'the others' and the 'interactions' that occur between 'self' and 'others' into sharper relief.

This intention reflects one of the most significant theoretical and methodological developments in the psychiatry of the last two decades. Over this period, there has been growing dissatisfaction with any theory or study of the individual which artificially isolates him from the context of his life, interpersonal and social. The inadequacy of what one might call a basically *monadic psychology* has become increasingly apparent. It is not my present task to review in detail the efforts that have been made from different angles to remedy this position. One may note, however, how formidable are the pitfalls. One has to avoid any schema that falsely fragments the reality one is attempting to describe, without losing sight of the distinction between fragmentation that does

violence to specifically personal facts, and a legitimate analysis of one aspect of a situation at a time. One has to steer clear of a dualism of substances – the severance of 'mind' and 'body', 'psychic' and 'physical'. One must not treat 'persons' as 'animals' or 'things', but one would be foolish to try to disrupt man from his relation to other creatures and from the matter that is his matrix. I believe that it is immensely difficult not to subject quite unwittingly our human reality to such conceptual mutilation that the original is quite lost in the process.

Moreover, even if we win the position whereby it is possible to give an apparently undistorted account of 'a person', we still have the task of giving an account of what happens *between* two or more persons. That is to say, if we consider the person alone, even as in 'object-relations' theory, wherein one considers the person in relation to his 'objects', 'internal' or 'external', we will have to consider the person as person-to-the-other, *acted upon* by the others in his world. As the others are there in this situation also, the person does not act or experience himself in a vacuum. *He is not the only agent in his 'world'*. How he perceives and acts towards the others, how they perceive and act towards him, how he perceives them as perceiving him, how they perceive him as perceiving them, etc., are all aspects of 'the situation' pertinent to an adequate understanding of the one person's total participation in it.

COMPLEMENTARITY

The woman needs a child to give her the identity of a mother. A man needs a wife for him to be a husband. A lover without a beloved is only a would-be lover. Therein lies the tragedy or comedy, according to one's point of view. Most 'identities' require an other in and through a relationship with whom self's identity is actualized. The other, for his part, by his or her actions may impose on self an unwanted identity. The husband who is a cuckold is likely to have had this identity imposed on him over and despite himself.

By complementarity[1] I denote that feature of relatedness whereby the other is required to fulfil or complete the self. One person may be the complement of another in many different senses and on many levels. This function is biologically determined at one level, and a matter of highly individualized choice at the other extreme. In between, complementarity is a more or less formalized, culturally conditioned aspect of social life, which is often discussed under the heading of role. It is fitting to speak of any aspect of self, for instance, a gesture, an action, a feeling, a need, a role, an identity, being the complement of a corresponding gesture, action, feeling, need, role, or identity of the other.

The child may or may not grow up to feel that by its very existence it confers a blessing on its parents, by fulfilling them in their parenthood, and vice versa. Such complementarity can be genuine or false. Stephen described how his mother was so full of herself that nothing he did seemed to be of any importance to her. Yet, she *needed* him. There was no way that he could be generous, whereas she was always generous. However, he discovered at least one way 'to get at' her: this was to refuse to accept her generosity. Her whole existence apparently depended on establishing collusions with others, to whom she would be the giver and they would be receivers. The receivers were allocated the conflict between envy and gratitude. Already as a child he sensed that herein he could have his revenge for the unwanted position he had been placed in.

One can imagine that the sense of gratifying or being gratified will have its dawning origins in breast-feeding, and that this complementarity can be genuinely reciprocal. If a sense of needing

[1] This use of the term complementarity is to be distinguished from other current usages. For instance, Haley (1958b) contrasts 'complementary' with 'symmetrical' relationships.

> 'A complementary relationship consists of one person giving and the other receiving rather than the two competing as in a symmetrical relationship. In a complementary relationship the two people are of unequal status, one is in a superior position and the other is in a secondary position. A "superior" position means that the person initiates action and the other follows that action; he offers criticism and the other accepts it, he offers advice and the other assumes that he should, and so on. In such a relationship the two people tend to fit together or complement each other' (p. 44).

The concept here presented is quite different.

the breast goes along from the very beginning with a sense of the breast needing the baby, if the mother actually gets something from the baby, while the baby gets all that is summarized by the expression 'the good breast' from the mother, a sense of taking will go along with a sense of giving, for the act of taking will be simultaneously a giving, and giving will be simultaneously taking.

Existentially, emptiness is not due to an empty stomach. The person can feel physically empty when he is not putting himself into what he is doing, or when what he is putting himself into feels intrinsically meaningless to him. But emptiness and futility can arise even when a person has put himself into his acts, and when these acts seem to have some point to him, if he has put himself into something and has been accorded no recognition by the other, if he has become convinced that he is not able to make any difference to anyone, no matter how much he puts himself into his acts. It is on the basis of such a situation, real in imagination, or phantasy, that angry, destructive attacks in phantasy on a *self-sufficient* 'good' breast are intensified in envy and spite. In phantasy, the agent attempts to destroy what it hates, and hates what it cannot have. The other who is felt to be unresponsive or impervious to the self-as-agent, and is *in fact* unresponsive, tends to induce by this imperviousness a sense of emptiness and impotence in the self. The destruction in phantasy of the other sets going a vicious circle. The self is both receiver and giver. The other is needed as both giver and receiver. The more the self is a receiver, the more the self needs to be a giver. The more the other cannot *receive*, the more the self needs to destroy. The more the self destroys the other, the more empty self becomes. The more empty the more envious, the more envious the more destructive.

The person who has as his prototype of the other the other-as-giver, but as otherwise unresponsive or impervious to him, will be involved in several crucial issues. He may be highly successful in different walks of life, but always feel a failure: 'I've nothing to give really. All I can do is to take. Who cares anyway?' He may feel that his life would only have meaning if it made a difference

to others, for he feels that this is all that matters: 'to leave your mark'. He may be sexually potent and 'successful', but feel that he never really 'gets through' – finding himself perpetually frustrated in the midst of any gratification. To make a difference to the other, in the sense of making some impression or dent in a brick wall, becomes his greatest triumph. To allow the other to feel that he or she makes a difference to him in the same sense, becomes his greatest defeat. Beyond a certain point, therefore, he becomes incapable of genuine reciprocity, and so he never finds it. He fears everyone in case they put one over on him. Others fear or pity him because they perceive his fear and hatred and longing. But they see that if they give him love he will spurn it (if he feels that he is being given anything) or he will despise it (if he feels that the other is dependent on him for receiving anything). At heart he has lost both any sense of his own capacity to give and any sense of 'the other' as receptive to him.

We may consider this further in relation to sexuality. For most people, there are at least two basic intentions in sexuality; firstly, to effect internal relief from tension; secondly, to effect a change in the other. Sexual experience is usually felt to be empty and pointless if the intrapersonal components of libidinal gratification are present in the absence of libidinal gratification in the other. Pure self-gratification, involving an increase of tension and its discharge by means of self-stimulation or stimulation by the other, can be eminently frustrating. Any theory of sexuality which makes the 'aim' of the sexual 'instinct' the achievement of closed uni-organismic orgasm, with the other, however selectively chosen, a mere object as means to this end, ignores what seems to be a basic human need to make a difference to another person. When Blake suggested that what men and women most required in one another was 'the lineaments of gratified desire' *in the other*, he was indicating that one of the most frustrating possible experiences is to have full discharge of one's energy or libido in the absence of making any difference to the other.

So-called hysterical frigidity in a woman is often based on

refusal to allow any man the triumph of 'giving' her satisfaction. Her frigidity is her triumph and her torment. The implication is, 'You can have your penis, your erection, your orgasm, but it doesn't make any difference to me.' And, indeed, existentially speaking, ability to have an erection, to ejaculate with an orgasm, is only a very limited aspect of being potent. It is potency without power to make a difference to the other. A man who complains of impotence is frequently a man who, analogously to the frigid hysterical woman, is determined not to give the woman the satisfaction of satisfying him.

Frustration becomes despair when the person begins to question his own capacity to 'mean' anything to anyone.

The prostitute will provide the required complementary 'lineaments' for a price, if they are not available elsewhere. A man who despairs at his own power to make any difference to a woman may be prepared therefore to settle for a good counterfeit of 'the real' thing, deriving pleasure from the very complexity of the disillusionment and illusionment involved in the play of mutual indifference, meanness and generosity, helplessness and control.

Thus, every relationship at least implies a definition of self by other and other by self. This complementary definitional component of the structure of one's identity can occupy a central or peripheral position, and may assume greater or lesser dynamic significance at different periods in a person's life. At some point, almost every child appears to rebel against the 'facticity' of the nexus of bonds which bind and fix him to these parents and siblings whom he has not chosen; he is defined and identified by being his father's son, or sister's brother. These people may in every other way seem strangers to him. Surely, he has affinities with parents who are finer, wiser, more exalted, etc. Yet, this nexus of complementary relational bonds is a point of stability, an anchor. One sees in orphans and adopted children the tremendously strong desire to find out 'Who they are', by tracing the father and mother who conceived them. They feel incomplete for want of a father or mother, whose absence leaves a very basic level of the

self-concept permanently incomplete. Something tangible, even a plaque on a tombstone, may be enough to allay great restlessness. It somehow enables a 'closure' to occur.

It is clear that a person's 'own' identity can never be completely abstracted from his identity-for-others. His identity-for-himself depends to some extent on the identity others ascribe to him, but also on the identities he attributes to the others, and hence on the identity or identities he attributes to the other(s) as attributing to him.

A person's 'identity' is first of all that whereby he is *the same* being in this place at this time as he was at that time in the past, and as he will be at that place in the future: it is the complex of those aspects of his being whereby he and others identify him. Most people tend to come to feel that they are continuous beings through childhood to old age, through the many vicissitudes of 'identifications' and roles adopted or allocated by others.

An 'identity' sometimes becomes an 'object' that a person feels he has lost, and starts to search for. All sorts of primitive phantasies are attached to this word which so readily lends itself to objectification and reification. The frequently described modern search for 'identity' can easily become another form of idolatry. Here, I am concerned only to examine some of the empirical interactional features of the experiences that people describe under this heading.

Intense *frustration* can arise from a failure to find that other without whom it is impossible, or without whom one feels it impossible, to establish a satisfactory 'identity'-for-self.

Shame, in contrast to guilt, appears to arise when a person finds himself condemned to an identity, a definition of himself, through being the complement of another, that he would wish to repudiate, but cannot. A person will have considerable difficulty in establishing a consistent definition of himself in his own eyes if the definitions of himself given by others are inconsistent or even simultaneously and mutually exclusive. The other may seek to define self in more than one way simultaneously. These definitions may be totally incompatible. Or two others may define self

simultaneously in incompatible ways. The effort to 'fit in with' them or to repudiate them may involve the most intense conflicts. These contradictory definitions of the self, conveyed explicitly or implicitly, perhaps by attributions and injunctions or by other means (as considered in some detail in Chapters XII and XIII) may by no means be recognized as such either by self or the others. There may be a demand for collusion *not* to recognize their incompatibilities. In that case, the individual may find himself not simply in conflict but in extreme confusion, not knowing what the confusion is about, nor even knowing that he is confused. Confusion and doubt generated by others who offer him part identities, which are complements of their identities, but which, unfortunately, are mutually incompatible in the one person (e.g. Brian who could not be his father's son and his mother's son simultaneously), undermine the person's sense of his identity and may drive him to place great importance on gaining control over the ways in which he may be defined. Self may then engage in a more or less total repudiation of the significance of his factual relational identity, that is, his biological or inescapable role allocations, and assert a right to be whom he chooses to be. This can be pushed to the point of seeking a 'way out' at all costs – even if it is a mad way out – if there seems no other resolution of intolerable dissonances in the jarring definitions given him by others, and/or intolerable dissonances between those different identities-for-others and a feasible identity-for-self.

For instance, in order to 'fit in with' two dissonant definitions of himself, he may develop 'incongruities' in simultaneous expressions: attempting thereby to be each of his different incompatible identities at the one time; or, without clearly knowing why, he may feel suffocated, oppressed, stifled, hemmed in; or he may develop a 'delusion' that by merely snapping his fingers he can be anyone he chooses, and make anyone else become anyone he (*p*) chooses that he (*o*) be (John, p. 85).

The following two stories exemplify some of the foregoing issues in a relatively simple way. They illustrate how distracted a

person may become if the identity he supposes himself to have as this son or daughter of that father and mother, i.e. as complementing these two others at least on a biological level, is radically undermined or *disconfirmed* (see Chapter VIII). Both required hospitalization at crisis point for some months.

THE CASE OF BRIAN

At the age of thirty-four, Brian was admitted to a mental hospital in a state of confusion and despair after being apparently happily married for ten years. He had begun to beat his wife brutally with a knotted rope and had taken to drink. He maintained insistently that he was wicked 'because there could be no greater wickedness than to inflict gratuitous suffering on a good person who loved you and whom you loved'.

He had lived with his mother until he was four years old. He grew up to believe that his father was dead. His memory of his mother was that she loved him and that she was good, sweet, kind, and innocent. When he was four, he remembers that his mother took him with her on a long journey. They entered a strange house and he met a strange man and woman. His mother burst into tears, kissed him, and ran out. He never saw or heard of her again. The strange man and woman started to call him by his name and told him that they were his mummy and daddy. He remembers being utterly confused. This confusion permeated his grief for his mother and all his feelings. His adult recollection is that all his energies went into desperate efforts to make some sense out of what had happened. His two 'parents', however, told him nothing. At the centre of his curiosity were perhaps two questions, 'Where is my mummy?' and 'Who am I?' In order to answer the second he had to find out *who* his mother and father were. In losing his mother in this particular way, he lost his 'old' self. The sense he made of the abrupt loss of his 'own' identity ('I am my mummy's son') and the simultaneous allocation to him by these two strangers of a new and apparently incompatible identity

('You are our son') was that his mummy had got rid of him because he was bad. This thought was the one reliable thing in his world he could cling to; it was the one construction that added everything up for him, and it became the one certainty of his life. He did not know *who* he was but he did know *what* he was. And if he *was* wicked, then he would *be* wicked.

He remembers that he came to this decision just before his fifth birthday.[1] He does not remember that he was aware of a sense of guilt, in that he could think of nothing terribly bad that he had done, there was nothing he felt terribly sorry about, but he 'knew' he was wicked! Because he was wicked he had to do wicked things. Once there had crystallized the self-definition 'I am a wicked person' it became his primary task in life to act wickedly.

His two 'parents' had two children of their own, a son, Jack, and a daughter, Betty, eighteen and sixteen years older than he, respectively. He was brought up as their younger brother; he remembered that his brother tried to be friends with him, but he was too much enclosed in his own confusion to respond. When he was a little older, this brother went to Canada.

He soon became very naughty and he began to be told that he was a bad lot and that he would come to nothing. He celebrated a secret triumph every time he induced anyone to pass this judgement on him. At school he used to torment a little girl who sat beside him, whom he felt was 'good, sweet, kind, and innocent'. The close connexion for him between his 'own' mummy and this girl was apparent to him. He thinks it was about this time that he began to cherish a phantasy of tormenting, in every way his imagination could devise, any girl or woman who was 'good, sweet, kind, and innocent'. For him, this was the supreme expression of wickedness, and the indulgence of this reverie became his chief and very secret delight.

When he was nine, a second decisive event occurred. Without his 'parents'' knowledge, he discovered his own adoption papers,

[1] I do not present this as data about this patient at five years old, but as the past-in-the-present, as told me by him.

and gathered from them at least that he was not one of 'them'. He concealed this knowledge from everyone and gradually became more and more filled with secret contempt and scorn for his 'adoptive' parents. His scorn was at, as he put it, the petty hypocrisy, deceit, and cowardice of these people who expected him to 'fall for' their stories that he was one of 'them' just because they said so. Every time he was naughty and they said in anger that he would come to nothing, he secretly endorsed his conviction that what seemed 'love' for him on their part was simply hypocrisy, and that really he meant nothing to them. 'They simply got a boy instead of a dog for their old age.' But he thought to himself, 'I will play their game for the time being.' In his secret scheming he reckoned that by being openly wicked he would simply be playing into their hands. Looking back over his childhood, he thought that by the age of nine he had come to believe that they really were trying to drive him into being a bad lot by persistently telling him that this was what he was. He felt if he came to a bad end he would simply be giving them the satisfaction of being right. If they saw him as a future nobody, the best way that he could frustrate, spite, and torment them was to become a somebody. Accordingly, his phase of being a difficult 'psychopathic' child ended and he began to do very well at lessons and to be very well behaved generally, all the time calling his 'parents'' bluff by forcing them into hypocritical expressions of pleasure at his achievements. By his teens, his life was based on intricate levels of deception. When his parents decided to 'break' the news to him when he was sixteen that he was adopted, under the impression that he believed himself to be a member of their family and that he had completely forgotten his mummy, he pretended to be quite shattered by this revelation, while secretly being full of hatred and bitter contempt for these fools who under the guise of kindness were now trying to drive him to the gallows.

On leaving school, he went into business. Pushed on, as he felt, primarily by spite, to become somebody, he was very successful.

Apart from tormenting the little girl at school, he had not acted upon his secret reveries and occasional dreams of tormenting girls. He perceived himself to be quiet, diffident, and charming towards women. In due course, in his early twenties, he married the girl of his reveries and dreams, a girl who was 'good, sweet, kind, and innocent'.

Their marriage was happy and they had a son. Then he began to quarrel with his wife compulsively and quite unjustifiably. He drank heavily for the first time. He finally acquired a large, heavy rope. He knotted it and beat her with it on several occasions, before she ran away to her parents out of sheer fear of his physical violence. This happened when their son was four years old.

It had completely escaped him that he had driven his wife away when their son was the same age as he had been when his mother had left him. It seems clear that as his son approached the age at which his mother had left him, there were complicated evocations of his phantasy mode of experiencing his desertion by his mother. His attacks on his wife and his drinking implied levels both of hatred and longing for her, and a life-long concealed mergence of phantasy, imagination, dream, and reality which far exceeded his understanding of himself. But it is doubtful whether the reality coefficient, as it were, of his wife as a person in her own right would have decreased to such an extent, if to the two previously mentioned catastrophic events (the loss of his mother: the discovery of his adoption papers) a third had not been added. Just before his 'disturbed behaviour' began, he had returned to his 'home' at Christmas. Much of his bitterness had left him. He had discovered, as he felt, genuine happiness with his wife for the first time in his life. He felt that after those many years he had at last come to terms with the fact that he was adopted: that he did not 'belong'. He could 'understand' that his 'parents' had 'thought it best' to deceive him. When at 'home' he had a talk with his sister and was able to tell her a little about the feelings he had kept secret all his life, remarking, however, that it would always remain a

regret to him that he would never know who his father was. She said: 'But didn't you know? I thought my parents had told you. Jack was your father.' Jack, the 'brother' who had made a special effort to be 'friends' with him when his mother had left him with the family, had recently died in Canada. This last revelation was too much for him. It was just 'beyond a joke'. All the dynamic of his life had been based on the conviction that he was not 'one of them'. His most prized secret possession had been that he *knew*. Now the structure and fabric of the meaning of his whole life was once again torn to shreds. He had been fooled; completely unsuspectingly, he had grown up where in fact he had belonged. The stupidity, the senselessness of it was too much. He reverted to the one certainty which he felt no one could take from him, because this would henceforth be a certainty dependent on no one but himself. Although he did not himself express it this way, it seems to me that he decided in effect not to trust 'reality' any more, but to act upon his most basic phantasy. He was wicked. He, therefore, went to his wife and flogged her and drank himself stupid until she left him and he had to be taken away.

When his wife did leave him, though he half realized he had driven her to this, he was at the same time quite taken aback. He had been secretly nourishing the idea that his wife was so totally ideal, so totally 'good, sweet, kind, and innocent' that she could never leave him, no matter how bad he was, no matter what he did. He had evidently kept by him a 'mother' who endured the worst possible torture that he could devise without punishing him or complaining in any way. When his wife, who had become completely confused with this mother, left him, when she showed that she was not good because she would not endure unconditionally the torments he inflicted on her, he devised a way whereby he could 'pay her off' and bind her to him for ever at the same time. This was that he would kill himself, so that his wife would inherit his money. She then would never be able to leave him, because she would know that she would never be able to forgive herself if she did.

The circumstances of this man's life seem to have been almost diabolically contrived to effect the maximum of tragic irony. His story is obviously a most exceptional one, but just for this reason we are enabled to see some general truths with particular clearness.

It is difficult to predict what definition of himself a man puts greatest store on. A self-definition might be called 'pivotal', when an individual's whole hierarchy of intentions and projects, whom he hates and what he fears, his sense of success or failure, depend on or 'pivot' around it. It may only be through some apparently insignificant event that the pivotal character of such a self-definition comes to light.

Let us suppose that something happens that is incompatible with the nuclear pivotal definition, perhaps a hidden one, that nevertheless is determining the individual's whole system of meanings. It is as though a linch-pin has been removed that had been holding the person's whole world together. Something has happened that challenges the whole meaning that the individual has been giving to 'reality'. It 'takes the ground from under' his feet. At least temporarily, that mode of participation in the world that we denote by such terms as 'contact with' and 'sense of reality' is stripped of validity. What is left is the primary level of phantasy. That person will be plunged into a most desperate crisis, where either he must restructure his whole 'real' view of others and the world and hence, basically, redefine his 'real' self; or he may try to annul the chasm between his definition of himself and the way others define him, by taking his stand on a self-definition whose basis is the primary experiences of what we are calling phantasy. This, however, will involve him in defining others in ways that are consistently disjunctive with their definitions of themselves, unless col-lusions can be established (see, especially, Chapters VIII and IX). Or, in his 'disillusion' and hatred of his own sense of reality, he may surrender it to the first comer, being prepared to embody a figure in a phantasy of the other. A man in this position may be perilously near to the brink of madness, and it may be that it will be his own hatred of his own

experiences to which he has been condemned that will lead him intentionally and recklessly to decalize and destructure them.

One's self-definition is the precipitate of the original effort to make sense out of the world. How desperately, and how precociously, it has been arrived at in the first place seems to be a function of need to discount the reality of phantasy, and this continuing need may determine how tenaciously it is clung to subsequently. I have come to see a person's need to pivot his or her life round complementary self-definitions (i.e. I am my father's son, husband's wife, etc.) as an expression of both a profound fear of 'phantasy' and distrust and/or hatred of 'reality'.

When Jesus spoke of leaving one's parents, presumably he meant, among other things, that one is not wise to cling for ultimate security to a role allocated to one by one's prototypical others, in *their* correlated system of reference, as a pretext for not finding oneself.

Now, in Brian's case, it appears that the sense he made out of his sudden, and at first completely inexplicable, abandonment by his mother was that he was bad. His definition of himself as bad became his credo: it was what he lived by: it was the rock upon which he built his life. 'Since I am bad, there is nothing for it but to *be* bad.' At the age of eight he became confirmed in a demonic will to express his secret hatred and contempt, by being good, sweet, kind, innocent, and successful. He simply took up another stance in relation to his pivotal or nuclear self-definition, which in principle remained unmodified. He 'knew' he was *not* their child: he 'knew' he was bad basically: he 'knew' that they did not know that he 'knew' the truth. It was upon this that he continued to base his whole life. His sister's words, 'Didn't you know that Jack was your father?' had an effect of removing the linch-pin that was keeping his whole world in place. When his illusory disillusion was shattered, the only straw he could clutch was the evocation of his conviction, 'I am bad'. But now: 'If I wasn't "really" bad then, I'll make up for it now.'

I would speculate that, on a phantasy level, the self-definition 'I

am bad' involved the confusion of his own being with a 'bad mother'. His attacks on his wife 'in phantasy' involved attacks upon both the re-projection of this 'bad mother' and the projection of his own 'innocence'. They were *felt* by him to be expressions of sheer badness directed at sheer goodness. I would expect that the phantasy he was submerged in, and hence that he could not see as such, that is, that was 'unconscious', was of his confused relationship with his utterly good and utterly bad mother. His complete unconsciousness of this is an index to me that he had remained all his life seriously alienated from making real his own possibilities, and from recognizing his wife as a real person, rather than as an embodiment of his phantom of his mother.

One is in the first instance the person that other people say one is. As one grows older one either endorses, or tries to discard, the ways in which the others have defined one. One can decide to be what it has been said one is. One may try not to be what, nevertheless, one has practically inevitably come to assume one is, in one's heart of hearts. Or one may try to tear out from oneself this 'alien' identity that one has been endowed with or condemned to, and create by one's own actions an identity for oneself, which one tries to force others to confirm. Whatever its particular subsequent vicissitudes, however, one's identity is in the first instance conferred on one. We discover who we already are.

When the child grows up without a knowledge of who his real parents are, or if he grows up later to discover that the people he thought were his 'real' parents are not so in fact, he is equally involved in a crisis which at base is to do with his own sense of his identity. Frequently the most compelling issue in the lives of those who are in this position is to discover their parents, especially their mother. Many motives go into this – revenge and hate among them, but always present is the assumption that somehow only through the establishing of a connexion with their origins can they really know who they really are. The need to know who one is appears to be one of the most deep-rooted in our humanity.

Since it is impossible to define oneself abstracted from the circumstances and conditions of one's birth and life, one always finds in those who are 'illegitimate' a sense of their own incompleteness. As one patient said, 'I am a book with no beginning . . .' Yet the quest to discover who one's parents were, however understandable, cannot constitute an ultimately authentic way to be oneself, at least, if it is the acting out of the phantasy that one needs one's mother's breast and father's penis in order to be oneself. Such a phantasy generates daydreams that, although poor and humble, one's 'origins' are wealthy and distinguished. This is the theme of so many of the myths that surround the birth of the hero. Alternatively, the parent, especially the mother, is imagined as utterly low and worthless, a slut, a prostitute. One will find her, pay for her, have intercourse with her, then face her with her son, shame her, perhaps kill her.

The 'family romance' is a dream of changing the others who define the self, so that *the identity of the self can be self-defined* by a re-definition of the others. It represents an attempt to master shame at being condemned by the 'facticity' of birth to be the son or daughter of this father and this mother, at being other than who one wishes to be. This shame is ultimately false. Yet the men and women of a whole society or culture, even of a whole epoch, may base themselves on such a premise.

Oedipus acted falsely in that he did violence to his own nature, not in marrying Jocasta, but in blinding himself.

THE CASE OF JOHN

John was the son of a prostitute and a naval officer. He lived with his mother until he was six, when he was transferred to his father's care. He was transported into a completely different world. His father, who had not married, sent him to a public school, where he did well, until, unexpectedly, he failed his university entrance exam. Thereupon he was called up. He went into the Navy, but failed to become an officer. His father, who was a very

exacting man, had been somewhat upset by his son's failure at university level, but was much more upset by his failure to become an officer, and it drew from him the remark that he did not think he could be his son at all. When, in the next few months, he disgraced himself as a sailor in a number of ways, his father told him quite plainly that he was not his son any more, and that he doubted if he ever had been. He formally disowned him.

During his early months in the Navy, John was noted to get into states of extreme anxiety, and it was in fact on the grounds of anxiety neurosis that he had been turned down as an officer. Subsequently, however, his behaviour was that of a psychopathic delinquent, and totally out of keeping with his 'character' hitherto. When his father finally disowned him, he developed an acute manic psychosis. The basic premise of the psychosis was: *he could be anyone he wanted, merely by snapping his fingers.*

We may note that his father's method of punishing him had been to threaten to destroy his identity. Being 'disowned' was a sword of Damocles that finally fell on him. Instead of growing up with the feeling, 'I am my father's son no matter what I do, and whether he or I like it or not', he grew up feeling: 'Only if I succeed in doing certain things will I be my father's son.' Without having this identity as firm ground under his feet, he developed the *delusion* that he could be who he wanted. This was in a sense only the mirror image of the delusion *implied* in his father's behaviour: 'You are my son if I say you are, and you are not my son if I say you are not.' This had to be a delusion at the point when he became manic, because he had yet not come to understand the sense in which this could be true; that is, he had, at that time, yet to understand the genuine counterpart of the false position he was placed in by his father, which finally became untenable. It was only when he was able to realize that there was a true sense in which his identity could be made to rest ultimately on his own personal decision that he stopped counterfeiting this realization by deluding himself. He finally realized that while he

was asserting a truth delusionally, he was deceiving himself. What was false was not so much what he asserted, but his own relationship to his assertions. He was making himself believe (that is, he was literally deluding himself) something which he did not in fact believe. What he did not realize was that the assumption in his sanity was his basic delusion: namely that he believed he was basically whoever his father decided he was. In becoming sane again, he had to discover both the psychosis in his previous sanity, and his *attempt at sanity* in his present madness: his delusion was, as Binswanger has called the manic life form, a swindle. By his delusional make-believe that he could be anyone he wanted, he swindled himself out of realizing the inauthentic grounds of his despair at this being genuinely possible.

CHAPTER VIII

Confirmation and disconfirmation

'In human society, at all its levels, persons confirm one another in a practical way, to some extent or other, in their personal qualities and capacities, and a society may be termed human in the measure to which its members confirm one another.

The basis of man's life with man is twofold, and it is one – the wish of every man to be confirmed as what he is, even as what he can become, by men; and the innate capacity in man to confirm his fellow-men in this way. That this capacity lies so immeasurably fallow constitutes the real weakness and questionableness of the human race: actual humanity exists only where this capacity unfolds. On the other hand, of course, an empty claim for confirmation, without devotion for being and becoming, again and again mars the truth of the life between man and man.

Men need, and it is granted to them, to confirm one another in their individual being by means of genuine meetings: but beyond this they need, and it is granted to them, to see the truth, which the soul gains by its struggle, light up to the others, the brothers, in a different way, and even so be confirmed.'

MARTIN BUBER (1957a)

Total confirmation of one man by another is an ideal possibility which seldom approaches realization. For practical purposes, as Buber states, confirmation is always 'to some extent or other'.

Any human interaction probably implies some measure of confirmation, at any rate of the physical beings, of the bodies of the participants. Even the slightest sign of recognition from another person at least serves to confirm one's presence in *his* world. 'No more fiendish punishment could be devised,' William James once wrote, 'even were such a thing physically possible, than that one should be turned loose in society and remain absolutely unnoticed by all the members thereof.'

We can think of confirmation, therefore, as partial and varying in manner, as well as in a global and absolute sense. One can think of individual actions and interaction sequences as being more or less, and in different ways, *confirmatory* or *disconfirmatory*. Confirmation is then a matter of intensity and of extensity, of quality and quantity. Persons, by reacting 'lukewarmly', imperviously, tangentially, and so on, may fail in various ways to endorse certain aspects of the other, while endorsing other aspects.

Modes of confirmation or disconfirmation vary. Confirmation could be through the medium of a responsive smile (visual), a handshake (tactile), an expression of sympathy (auditory). The crux seems to be that it is a response by the other that is *relevant* to the evocative action, in according recognition to the evocatory act, and accepting its significance at least for the evoker, if not for the respondent. A confirmatory reaction by the other is a direct response, in the sense at least of being 'to the point', or 'on the same beam' or 'wave-length' as the first person's initiatory or evocatory action. This means that a partially confirmatory response need not be in agreement, or gratifying, or satisfying. Rejection can be confirmatory if it is a direct response (i.e. not tangential) that gives recognition to the evoking action and grants it its own significance and validity.

Since there are different levels of confirmation or disconfirmation, an action may be confirmed at one level, and disconfirmed at another. Some forms of 'rejection' imply at least limited recognition – the perception of and responsiveness to what is rejected.

An action which is 'rejected' is perceived and this perception shows that it is accepted as a fact. Thus, direct 'rejection' is not tangential: it is not mocking or in other ways invalidating. It need neither depreciate nor exaggerate the original action. And it is not necessarily synonymous with indifference or imperviousness.

It may be that there are some areas of a person's being for which there is a more crying need for confirmation than others. It may be that there are some forms of disconfirmation which may be more actively destructive of the person's developing sense of himself than others, and which could therefore be schizogenic. There is evidently an ontogenesis of confirmation and disconfirmation which has barely begun to be explored. The responsiveness of the other which is adequate to the infant will be quite inappropriate to an older child or an adult. There may be periods in the life of a child when he has experienced more confirmation or disconfirmation of himself than at other periods. The qualities and capacities which are confirmed or disconfirmed by his mother or father, by brothers, sisters, friends, may vary widely. An aspect of himself which is negated by one person may be actively endorsed by another. A part or aspect of himself which is 'false', or which he regards as false, may be confirmed actively and persistently by one of his parents or by both of them, or even by all the significant others at the one time in his life. Thus, at different periods of life, the practical need for, and modes of, confirmation or disconfirmation can vary considerably, that is to say, both the aspects or areas of the person's being which are in question vary, and the modes of confirming or disconfirming particular aspects of his being vary.

In those families of schizophrenics that have been studied in detail,[1] a consistent finding appears to be that there is minimal genuine confirmation of the parents by each other and of the child by each parent, separately or together, but there may not be obvious disconfirmation. One finds, rather, interactions marked

[1] Research on this area currently under way at the Tavistock Clinic has not yet been published. The major contributions to these family studies are listed by Laing (1960). For an excellent critique of the field see Spiegel and Bell (1959).

by pseudo-confirmation, by acts which masquerade as confirming actions but are counterfeit.[1] These may be pretences to confirm the child's being – acts that go through the motions of confirmation in the absence of genuine confirmation; or pseudo-confirmation may take the form of actively and genuinely confirming some fictional child which the child is taken to be, without the authentic self of the child ever receiving recognition. The characteristic family pattern that has emerged from the studies of the families of schizophrenics does not so much involve a child who is subject to outright neglect or even to obvious trauma, but a child whose authenticity has been subjected to subtle but persistent mutilation, usually quite unwittingly. Moreover, it seems that if for many years lack of genuine confirmation takes the form of actively confirming the child's false self, he comes to be placed in such a false position that *he feels guilt or shame at being honest or genuine about his 'real' feelings.* Where acts of the confirmation of a false self have been going on without anyone in the family being aware that this was the state of affairs, the schizogenic potential of the situation seems to reside largely in the fact that it is not recognized by anyone; or, if the mother or father or some other member or friend of the family is aware of this state of affairs, this knowledge is not brought out into the open, and no effort is made to intervene – if such intervention were only to state the truth of the matter.

But for the moment we can look at some acts of confirmation or disconfirmation, without prejudging the issue in any way as to whether or to what extent we are dealing with schizogenic situations.

There may be a failure to recognize a person as agent. The attribution of agency to human beings is one way we distinguish people from things, which are set in motion by some other agent. It seems to be a factor in some childhoods that this specific quality of being human, whereby a human being can come to feel that he is an agent in his own right, is precisely that which is not confirmed

[1] cf. Wynne *et al.* (1958).

by the original significant others. It becomes extremely illuminating to match observations on the way a child is treated by his parents with the so-called 'delusions' which the psychotic child or adult may express. For instance, Julie (see Laing, 1960) frequently said she was a 'tolled bell' (told belle), that she was 'tailored bread' (bred). When it was possible to observe the interaction between her mother and her, one could see that this was in fact true. The mother was quite unable to confirm any agency on the girl's part. The mother was unable to respond with any life to the spontaneity of the girl and could only interact with the girl if she, the mother, could be the initiator of any interaction between them. Thus, the mother would visit the hospital daily and one could see the girl sitting in an entirely catatonically passive way while the mother combed her hair, put ribbons in it, and hairpins in it, powdered her face, applied lipstick to her lips and mascara to her eyes, so that the final appearance resembled nothing so much as that of a beautiful, lifesize, lifeless doll which her mother 'told' (tolled). The girl was, as she appeared always to have been, the mother's 'transitional object', to use Winnicott's term. What is both highly significant and remarkable was that it was just this passive listless 'thing' quality of the girl which the mother regarded as most 'normal' about her. The mother tended to react to any spontaneity on the part of the girl with extreme anxiety and attributions of badness or madness. To be good was to do what she was told (op. cit. pp. 195–224).

FURTHER EXAMPLES OF CONFIRMATION AND DISCONFIRMATION

1. During direct observation of the relationship between a six-month-old child and its mother, the occasions in which smiling occurred were noted. It was observed, first of all, that infant and mother smiled at each other not infrequently. It was then further observed that the mother, during the periods of observation, never once responded with a smile to the infant's initial smile at

her. She, however, evoked smiling in the infant by smiling herself, by tickling and playing with the infant. When she was the evoker of the infant's smiles, she in turn smiled back, but she responded with a flat, dull look if the infant took the initiative (cf. Brodey, 1959).

It appears that we have here an example of confirmation or endorsement given to compliant responses in the infant and a total, in this one instance, failure to respond in a confirmatory manner to smiling initiated by the infant.

2. A little boy of five runs to his mother holding a big fat worm in his hand, and says, 'Mummy, look what a big fat worm I have got.' She says, 'You are filthy – away and clean yourself immediately.' The mother's response to the boy is an example of what Ruesch (1958) has called a *tangential response*.[1] In terms of the boy's feeling, the mother's response is at a tangent, as it were. She does not say, 'Oh yes, what a lovely worm.' She does not say, 'What a filthy worm – you mustn't touch worms like that; throw it away.' She does not express pleasure or horror, approval or disapproval of the worm, but she responds by focusing on something which he has not considered and which has no immediate importance to him, namely whether he is clean or dirty. She may be saying either, 'I am not interested in looking at your worm unless you are clean', or, 'Whether or not you have a worm is of no importance to me – all that matters to me is whether you are clean or dirty, and I only like you when you are clean.' In developmental terms, the mother can be seen as ignoring the maturational level in the boy which is based on genitality, and as implying to him that she recognizes only anal parameters,

[1] Ruesch writes:
'The criteria which characterize the tangential responses can be summarized as follows:
The reply inadequately fits the initial statement.
The reply has a frustrating effect.
The reply is not geared to the intention behind the original statement as it is perceivable through word, action, and context of the situation.
The reply emphasizes an aspect of the statement which is incidental' (Ruesch, op. cit. pp. 37–48).

namely, that she is concerned only with the issue of whether he is clean or dirty.

In this tangential response there is a failure to endorse what the boy is *doing* from his point of view, namely, showing his mummy a worm. One might suppose that 'boy-with-worm' is a definition that might facilitate a later self-identity that will include 'man-with-penis'. In the absence of a confirmatory response from the mother, the nascent or latent implications of 'boy-with-a-worm' will take on special meanings. The whole issue will require that the boy develop special means of coping in order to achieve independently of, or despite, his mother the self-identity 'man-with-penis'. One can imagine that he might defiantly collect worms. He might feel that he can only collect worms if he keeps himself very clean. He might feel that he can collect worms as long as he lies about it to his mother, or at least as long as his mother knows nothing about it. He might feel that indeed the most important thing was to be clean (i.e. have his mother's approval), and that collecting worms did not matter. He might develop a phobia for worms, etc. At all events, one imagines that, although his mother has not openly disapproved of his having a worm, her indifference to it is likely to generate at least some transitory confusion, anxiety, and guilt in him, and that, if this particular response is paradigmatic of the situation between him and his mother at this stage in his development, then it is going to be that much more difficult for him to have an unselfconscious, guilt-and-anxiety-free, non-defiant, real sense of the many aspects of being 'boy-with-worm' and 'man-with-penis'.

Furthermore, since the parameters governing his mother's perception of him are clean-dirty, good-bad, and her equations are clean=good, dirty=bad, he will at some point have to decide whether these are the decisive parameters and the necessary equations for him. If he is dirty, he may get to the point that, although his mother says he is bad, he does not feel that he is bad, and conversely, that if he is clean, that he is not necessarily good: that, in fact, he might well be good yet dirty, and bad yet clean.

Alternatively, he may endorse his mother's parameters and equations, to become a good-clean or a bad-dirty boy and man, and ignore, as his mother has done, all those aspects of life which cannot be subsumed under these categories.

3. I had begun a session with a schizophrenic woman of twenty-five, who sat down in a chair some distance away from me while I was sitting half facing her in another chair. After about ten minutes during which she had not moved or spoken, my mind began to drift away on to my own private preoccupations. In the midst of these, I heard her say in a very small voice, 'Oh, please don't go so far away from me.'

The psychotherapy of such persons is a separate subject, but it is appropriate to remark on the issue of confirmation or disconfirmation within the psychotherapy situation.

When the patient made this remark, one could respond in a number of ways. A possible comment that some psychotherapists might make would be, 'You feel I am away from you.' By this, one would neither confirm nor disconfirm the validity of her 'feeling' that I was no longer 'with' her, but would confirm the fact that she experienced me as away. Indeed, the endorsement of the 'feeling' is here intentionally non-committal about the validity of the feeling, namely, whether or not *I* was actually going away from her. One could go on to articulate various reasons why she should be frightened at me not staying 'with' her, e.g. her need to have me 'with' her as a defence against her own impulses. One might construe her plea as an expression of her need to fill up her own emptiness by my presence, her need to treat me as a 'transitional object', and so on. However, in my view, the most important thing for the therapist to do in such a situation is to confirm the fact that the patient has correctly registered *my* actual withdrawal of my 'presence' if she has correctly done so. There are many patients who are very sensitive to such things, but are never sure of the reliability much less validity of their own sensitivity. They cannot trust other people, and yet they cannot trust their

own 'intuitions' either. Such a person (*p*) is tormented, for instance, by not knowing whether he just 'feels' that the other is preoccupied and uninterested, while he (*o*) is pretending to be intensely attentive: or whether he (*p*) can 'trust' his (*p*'s) feelings to register the real state of the relationship. One of the most important questions, therefore, is whether such mistrust of his own 'feelings' and the testimony of others arises from such consistent inconsistencies within his original nexus – between the evidence of his empathic attributions about the others, his own experience of himself, the testimony of the others about their feelings, and the constructions they (*o*) place on his experience of, and intentions towards, them, etc. – that he has never been able to arrive at any trust in himself in these respects.

The only thing, therefore, I could say to my patient was, 'I am sorry.'

4. A nurse was engaged to look after a somewhat catatonic, hebephrenic schizophrenic patient. Shortly after they had met, the nurse gave the patient a cup of tea. This chronically psychotic patient, on taking the tea, said, 'This is the first time in my life that anyone has ever given me a cup of tea.' Subsequent experience with this patient tended to substantiate the simple truth of this statement.[1]

It is not so easy for one person to give another a cup of tea. For instance, if a lady gives me a cup of tea, she might be showing off her teapot, or her tea-set; she might be trying to put me in a good mood in order to get something out of me; she may be trying to get me to like her; she may be wanting me as an ally for her own purposes against others. She might pour tea from a teapot into a cup and shove out her hand with cup and saucer in it, whereupon I am expected to grab them within the two seconds before they will become a dead weight. In other words, the action could be a mechanical one and there may be no recognition of *me* implicit in

[1] This anecdote was told me by Dr. Rycroft.

it. A cup of tea could be handed me without a genuine act of *giving* being involved.

Thus, as in the Zen tea ceremony, it is both the simplest and most difficult thing in the world for *one person*, genuinely being his or her self, *to give* (in fact, and not just in appearance) *another person* (realized in his or her own being by the giver) *a cup of tea* (that is to say, a cup of tea, in fact, and not simply in appearance). Thus, this patient is saying that many cups of tea have passed from other hands to hers in the course of her life, but this notwithstanding, she has never in her life felt that a cup of tea has genuinely been given to her. Schizophrenics are *par excellence* sensitive to a failure to be recognized as human beings by others. From my investigation of their families, I would not be surprised that this patient was quite accurate in her statement. It is perhaps in this sense that Frieda Fromm-Reichmann has remarked that a schizophrenic is a person who needs both to give and to receive more love than the ordinary person.

What the schizophrenic requires of us, as much as anything, is uncorrupted spontaneity and honesty.

CHAPTER IX

Collusion

I

The term collusion has the same root as de-lusion, il-lusion, and e-lusion. The root 'lusion' ultimately comes from the past participle of the Latin verb, *ludere*, whose meaning varies in both classical and late Latin. It can mean to play, to play at, or to make a sport of, to mock, to deceive.

Delusion implies total self-deception. Illusion, as it is frequently used psycho-analytically, implies a capacity to deceive oneself under a strong wish, but does not, however, involve as total a self-deception as delusion.

I wish to employ the term collusion with retention of the resonances both of playing at and of deception. Collusion will then be a 'game' played by two or more people whereby they deceive themselves – a game involving mutual self-deception. Whereas delusion and illusion are terms which can be applied to only one person, collusion is necessarily a trans-personal or interpersonal process.

Collusion, as it is being used here, will cover only those interpersonal manœuvres in which self and others co-operate; that is to say, those interpersonal processes in which each plays at the other's game willingly, even though he may not be fully aware of doing so. When the one person is predominantly the 'victim' of a trick or manœuvre or manipulation, the relationship will not be called collusive. It is clear, of course, that it will be difficult to

determine in many instances whether a relationship is collusive or not. For instance, a slave may collude with his master in being a slave in order to save his life, even to the point of carrying out orders which are destructive to his true humanity.

When two people are in relation, each may mutually confirm the other or genuinely 'complement' the other. On the other hand, to expose oneself to the other requires both confidence in oneself and trust in the other. Although the desire for a confirmatory response from the other is present in everyone, what often happens is that the person caught between trust and mistrust, confidence and despair, settles for counterfeit acts of confirmation on the basis of pretence.

Buber (1957b) asks us to

> '. . . imagine two men, whose life is dominated by appearances, sitting and talking together. Call them Peter [p] and Paul [o].[1] Let us list the different configurations which are involved. First, there is Peter as he wishes to appear to Paul [$p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow p)$] and Paul as he wishes to appear to Peter [$o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow o)$]. Then there is Peter as he really appears to Paul, that is, Paul's image of Peter [$(o \rightarrow p : p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow p)$], which in general does not in the least coincide with what Peter wishes Paul to see; and similarly there is the reverse situation [$p \rightarrow o : o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow o)$]. Further, there is Peter as he appears to himself [$(p \rightarrow p)$], and Paul as he appears to himself [$(o \rightarrow o)$]. Lastly, there are the bodily Peter and the bodily Paul, two living beings and six ghostly appearances, which mingle in many ways in the conversations between the two. Where is there room for any genuine inter-human life?'

If we consider this situation as a counterfeit of genuine relatedness, one can see that either Peter or Paul may try to establish an identity for himself by achieving a particular identity for the

[1] The shorthand is, of course, mine (see Appendix).

other. The need for such a venture depends for Peter (p) on the extent to which he finds it necessary for Paul to see him (p) in a particular light, in order for him, Peter (p), to feel that he (p) is the person he (p) wants to be. Peter may feel that he needs Paul to be a certain person in order for him (p) to have the opportunity to be the person he wishes to be. In order for Peter to be able to experience himself as seen in a particular light, Paul has to be the person who can see him in this light. If Peter needs to be appreciated, then Paul has to be seen as someone who is capable of appreciating him and does. If Paul quite evidently is seen not to be appreciating him, Peter will be strongly motivated to make out that Paul is not the sort of person to be able to do so. If it is necessary for Peter to be a generous person, Paul must be the sort of person who can be the person who can accept Peter's generosity. If Paul, instead of being grateful to Peter for what Peter gives him, responds by saying that Peter is simply wishing to show his own superiority by being a person who can give, or by saying that he is trying to blackmail Paul into being grateful to him, etc., Peter is likely to try to break off the relationship with Paul or to discover that Paul has difficulties in allowing himself to be helped. The position here is complicated because Peter may be seen by Paul or Paul may be seen by Peter in more real terms than he, Paul, can see himself. Prior to the need for appearances is the phantasy level of experience of self and other. The need for appearances implies not that both are hiding their 'true' selves which they secretly know, but that neither has Peter arrived at any genuine realization of himself or of Paul, nor has Paul any genuine realization of himself or of Peter.

There are many reactions, so far relatively unexplored by interpersonal psychology, to being seen not as one takes oneself to be, but as the other sees one. Under such circumstances, where there is a disjunction between a person's self-identity ($p \rightarrow p$) and his identity-for-the-other ($o \rightarrow p$), one is not surprised if p reacts by anger, anxiety, guilt, despair, indifference. A disjunction of this kind can lend fuel to a relationship; it seems to be the cement that

binds certain people together in bondage, and constitutes 'the issue' between them that they compulsively take up with each other again and again; alternatively, some people faced with such a situation simply abandon the relationship.

This issue is closely related to the situation that arises when there are discrepancies between the 'complement' that *p* may wish to be for *o*, and the 'complement' that *o* may wish to be to *p*. Thus a man may wish his wife to 'mother' him, while she may wish him to mother her. Their needs in this respect may not 'fit' or dovetail. They may hate each other or despise each other, or show each other sympathetic tolerance. They may both recognize the other's need without fulfilling it. However, if the man insists on seeing his wife and acting towards her as though she were his mother, while being impervious to the fact that she feels like a little girl, the disjunction between his concept of her and her experience of herself may sclerose into a discrepancy that cannot be mended by collusion.

In such cases, we are denoting something other than the psychoanalytic term 'projection'. The one person does not wish merely to have the other as a hook on which to hang his projections. He strives to find in the other, or to induce the other to become, the very *embodiment* of that other whose co-operation is required as 'complement' of the particular identity he (*p*) feels impelled to sustain. The other, in such circumstances, can experience a peculiar form of guilt which is, I think, quite specific to this disjunction. If he does not allow himself to be drawn into collusion, he feels guilty for not being or not becoming the embodiment of the complement demanded by *p*'s self-adopted identity. However, if he *does* succumb, if he is seduced, he may become estranged from his own true possibilities, and is guilty thereby of betraying himself.

If he does not take fright at experiencing himself as being engulfed by the other, resent being 'used', or in some other way rebel against being drawn into collusion, it may be under pressure from a false guilt that he becomes, as he may feel, the unwilling

accomplice or victim of the other, although being 'the victim' may be his very act of collusion. But the other may be inducing him to assume that false self that he himself (*p*) hankers to be and which he (*p*) may be only too glad to embody, especially if the other is prepared to reciprocate by embodying a fiction that he (*p*) desires. We shall leave for a moment, however, the more detailed consideration of various forms and techniques of open or concealed, consistent or incompatible appeals or coercions that *p* can make to *o*, and the widely different ways that *o* may experience and react to them.

Collusion is cemented when *p* finds in *o* that other who will 'confirm' *p* in the phantasy position which *p* is trying to make real, and vice versa. In this case the ground is prepared for a prolonged mutual evasion of truth, fulfilment, and reality. Each has found another to endorse his own phantasy notion of himself and to lend to this fiction a certain semblance of life.

A collusive dyad is liable always to have some instability in it and sometimes it can become sheer hell.

Sartre (1952b) has based a play, *Huis Clos*, on the agony of the failure to sustain one's identity when the project of one's life is such that it has to be an identity based on collusion. Three dead people, a man and two women, find themselves in a room together. The man is a coward; one woman is a heterosexual bitch, and the other is a clever lesbian. The man's main fear is that he is a coward, more particularly, that other men will not respect him. The heterosexual woman's main fear is that she is not attractive to men. The lesbian's main fear is that women will not love her. The man needs another man by preference or, second best, an intelligent woman who will accord him the recognition he requires in order that he can see himself as a brave man. He is prepared to be as far as he can what either of these two women want him to be, if only they will collude with him in telling him that he is brave. However, the one woman can see him only as a mere object for her sexual satisfaction, which is precisely what he is determined not to be. He is unable to give the lesbian anything

she wants, except to be a coward, which is how she requires to see men in order to justify herself. The two women are equally unable to find anyone with whom they can enter into collusion – the lesbian since she is with a man and a heterosexual woman, and the heterosexual woman, since she cannot *be* a heterosexual woman without 'meaning' something to a man. But this man is not interested. Unable to sustain their 'bad faith' with themselves by means of collusion with another, each person remains tormented by the anxiety and despair which haunts his or her life. In this situation: '*L'enfer, c'est les autres.*'

Genet (1957b), in his play *The Balcony*, has taken the theme of fake relationships based on collusive conjunctions of identity-for-self and identity-for-the-other, and developed it in his own way. Most of the play takes place in a brothel. The girls in the brothel are shown to be, in a literal sense, pro-stitutes. They stand for (pro-stare) whatever the client requires them to be, so that he can become for a while that figure which he wishes to be. Three such identities for which colluding others as prostitutes are required are Bishop, Judge, General. The Bishop requires a penitent to condemn and an executioner to carry out his orders; the Judge, a thief; the General, his mare.

As the Judge explains to the girl who must be a thief for him, and who must see him as a judge: 'You have got to be a model thief if I am to be a model judge. If you are a fake thief, I become a fake judge. Is that clear?'

And he says to the executioner: '. . . without you I would be nothing . . .'

And then to the thief: '. . . and without you, too, my child. You are my two perfect complements. Ah, what a fine trio we make!'

To the thief (p. 18):

THE JUDGE: But you, you have a privilege that he hasn't, nor I either, that of priority. My being a judge is an emanation of your being a thief. You need only refuse – but

you'd better not! – need only refuse to be who you are – what you are, therefore who you are – for me to cease to be . . . to vanish evaporated. Burst. Volatilized. Denied. Hence good born of . . . What then? What then? But you won't refuse, will you? You won't refuse to be a thief? That would be wicked. It would be criminal. You'd deprive me of being! (*imploringly*) Say it, my child, my love, you won't refuse?

THE THIEF: (*coyly*) I might.

THE JUDGE: What's that? What's that you say? You'd refuse? Tell me where. And tell me again what you've stolen.

THE THIEF: (*curtly, and getting up*) I won't.

THE JUDGE: Tell me where. Don't be cruel . . .

THE THIEF: Your tone is getting too familiar. I won't have it!

THE JUDGE: Miss . . . Madame. I beg of you. (*He falls to his knees.*) Look, I beseech you. Don't leave me in this position, waiting to be a judge. If there were no judge, what would become of us, but what if there were no thieves?

That is, people use the brothel in order to make what singly could only be an *illusionary* or *delusionary identity* into *a collusive identity*. The Madame lists the 'identities' for which her clients patronize the brothel.

'There are two kings of France with coronation ceremonies and different rituals, an admiral at the stern of his sinking destroyer, a bishop during the perpetual adoration, a judge performing his functions, a general on horseback, a boy of Algiers surrendering, a fireman putting out a fire, a goat attached to a stake, a housewife returning from market, a pickpocket, a robbed man who's bound and beaten up, a Saint Sebastian, a farmer in his barn . . . but no chief of police . . . nor colonial administrator, though there *is* a missionary dying on the cross, and Christ in person' (p. 46).

However, there is one person who does not visit the brothel in order to become somebody else – the Chief of Police. This is because he feels the fulfilment of his life would be when another person wishes to assume *his* identity, by wishing to become the Chief of Police. He suffers because no one appears to want to play at being him, for, so far, in the history of the brothel his is the one identity for which there has been no client. All other human beings are his 'complements' whether they like it or not. This no longer satisfies him. He alone in the play does not wish to assume the identity of another. He feels that he will be fulfilled, and therefore able to die, only when another identifies himself with him.

The world of the brothel is challenged by the Revolution. The Revolution to end illusion and collusion. The Revolution to become oneself, to be serious, to be what one is. One of the girls from the brothel has escaped to become the mistress of Roger, the leader of the Revolution. But her vocation is to be a pro-stitute. She somehow has not the knack of simply doing what she is doing. She is unable to perform an act for its own sake. If she is dressing a wound, she cannot but play at dressing a wound, whether it be with tender solicitude or whether it be roughly and matter of factly. The leaders of the Revolution recognize that the people need to be inspired to fight and to die; they need some emblem; they cannot sustain their revolt without some illusion. They decide to use Chantal, the girl from the brothel, who is born to embody the illusions of men: she is a born symbol. Roger opposes this use of Chantal on principle, but he is overruled. A member of the Revolutionary Committee addresses him:

LUKE: I'm not impressed by your speeches. I still maintain that in certain cases you've got to use the enemy's weapons. That it's indispensable. Enthusiasm for freedom? It's a fine thing, I don't deny it, but it would be even finer if freedom were a pretty girl with a warm voice. After all, what does it matter to you if we storm the

barricades by following a female like a pack of males in heat? And what of it if the groans of the dying are groans of life?

ROGER: Men don't revolt in order to go chasing after a female.

LUKE: (*stubbornly*) Even if the chase leads them to victory?

ROGER: Then their victory is already sick. Their victory has a dose of clap, to talk like you . . . (p. 57).

Chantal embodies indeed everything Roger is bent on destroying. Yet what he loves in her is what made it possible for her to enter the brothel, namely, her capacity to symbolize and embody for men what they wish to live and die for.

CHANTAL: The brothel has at least been of some use to me, for it has taught me the art of shamming and acting. I've had to play so many roles that I know almost all of them. And I've had so many partners . . . (p. 64).

Chantal's capacity for this is too great for the revolutionary leaders not to wish to turn it to their account.

MARK: We're going to use Chantal. Her job's to embody the revolution. The job of the mothers and the widows is to mourn the dead. The job of the dead is to cry for revenge. The job of our heroes is to die with a smile . . . The Palace will be occupied this evening. From the balcony of the Palace Chantal will rouse the people, and sing. The time for reasoning is past; now's the time to get steamed up and fight like mad. Chantal embodies the struggle; the people are waiting for her to represent victory.

ROGER: And when we're victors, what'll we have gained?

MARK: There'll be time enough to think of that (p. 63).

It becomes clear that the initial seriousness of the Revolution is

turning into song and carnival. As the Queen's envoy, who has a close liaison with the brothel world, says:

> 'I don't doubt their courage or cleverness, but my spies are in the thick of the revolution, and in some cases they're rebels themselves. Now, the populace, which is intoxicated with its first victories, has reached the point of exaltation at which one light-heartedly forsakes actual combat for useless sacrifice. It will be easy to take the leap. The peoples are not engaging in battle. They're indulging in revelry' (p. 71).

When it seems as though the Revolution, nevertheless, is at the point of carrying the day, since the Queen, Bishop, Judge, and General have been killed or have disappeared, if they ever existed, the envoy from the Queen persuades the Madame to dress up as the Queen, and three clients to dress up as Bishop, Judge, and General. They appear at the balcony of the brothel so attired. They drive through the city. They are photographed by the Press and interviewed. Whereas each client has been paying one prostitute to play the same game with him, to collude with him, to be a sinner for the Bishop, a thief for the Judge, a horse for the General to ride on, when all the people respond to this man as a Bishop, this man as a Judge, that man as a General, the false Bishop becomes a real Bishop, the false Judge a real Judge, the false General a real General, and by the same token the Queen becomes Queen, in as true a sense perhaps as any person ever is or can be a Bishop, General, Judge, or Queen.

The hero of the play is the Chief of Police. The Chief of Police has never yet been impersonated, but he feels he will know by a certain weakness in his muscles that the moment has come when he can cease to act, sit back, and restfully await death. He is presented as the only man who really acts in the course of the play. The others, if they were logical, would have to admit that even if they were what they were, Bishop, Judge, General, they would still be phoneys. As the Chief of Police challenges them:

CHIEF OF POLICE: You've never performed an act for its own sake, but always so that, when linked with other acts, it would make a Bishop, a Judge, a General . . .

THE BISHOP: That's both true and false. For each act contained within itself its leaven of novelty.

CHIEF OF POLICE: (*correcting him*) Forgive me, Monsignor, but this leaven of novelty was immediately nullified by the fact that the act turned on itself.

THE JUDGE: We acquired greater dignity thereby (p. 97).

The Chief of Police is not denied his happy ending. He has the satisfaction of being able to witness before the play ends, through a viewing box, the leader of the Revolution, Roger, come to the brothel and be the first man who had ever wanted to be the Chief of Police. To be this he must enter a Mausoleum which the entire people have slaved to build, in which are tombs enshrined in tombs, cenotaphs in cenotaphs, coffins in coffins, all deathly silent, in which there is only the coldness of death, and the groaning of men who have slaved to hollow out this stone in which it is proved that he is loved and that he is a conqueror.

Genet leaves it an open question whether or not, or in what sense, nothing other than collusive make-believe is possible. Perhaps it is possible, 'to see things as they are, to gaze at the world tranquilly, and accept responsibility for the gaze, whatever it might see'. But the last word is with the Madame.

IRMA: In a little while, I'll have to start all over again . . . put all the lights on again . . . dress up . . . (*a cock crows*). Dress up . . . ah, the disguises! Distribute roles again . . . assume my own . . . (*she stops in the middle of the stage, facing the audience*). Prepare yours . . . judges, generals, bishops, chamberlains, rebels who allow the revolt to congeal. I'm going to prepare my costumes and studios for tomorrow . . . You must now go home, where everything – you can be quite

sure – will be even falser than here . . . You must go now. You'll leave by the right, through the alley . . . (*she extinguishes the last light*). It's morning already (*a burst of machine-gun fire*).

II

The issues that Sartre and Genet have depicted in their plays implicate the ordinary person in every moment of his life. The following are some examples from an analytic group of the search to find in 'the other' the 'complement' required to sustain an identity based on collusion.[1]

The group consisted of seven men, aged from twenty-five to thirty-five. With one exception, they were quite successful middle-class people. Jack owned a garage; Bill worked in his father's grocery business. The exception was Richard, who had failed innumerable examinations and was now living at home with his mother, trying to recoup his energies for a further effort to become a chartered accountant.

The group assumed in the early sessions that it had come together to be dependent on the analyst. He really should have been telling them what to do, asking them questions, giving advice. When he confined himself to being silent or making remarks about the situation, they decided, at the suggestion of Jack, who was apparently the most independent of them, that he must be waiting in order to help them and that their best way to help him to help them was to talk about themselves. He assumed the role of leader, asking questions, drawing people out, directing the discussion along the lines of difficulties with women, smoothing over tensions, and speaking a bit about his own feelings, mainly in respect of women. The group as a whole warmed to this, with the exception of Bill. He spoke to the others on his own initiative but not very freely, but he never spontaneously addressed Jack: when occasionally asked a question by Jack, he

[1] The data upon which this account is based are drawn from complete sound-recordings of group meetings.

answered laconically. Jack seemed slightly put out by the fact that Bill did not respond to his lead as the others did.

In the fifth session, there developed the usual discussion about women, led by Jack, in which everyone participated except Bill. The latter, apparently quite irrelevantly, broke in on this discussion to express vehemently his dislike of football, and the crowds who went to see football. It was an unintelligent game, and football fans were stupid people with whom he could feel nothing in common. (It had been established that all the other group members went to football matches. Jack went also, not, however, he had said, for the football, but because he wanted to be 'one of the boys'.) Bill went on about how much he longed to meet someone with common interests, who shared his appreciation of the arts, who was not just the same as all the other dull uninteresting people, beginning with his father, who could not see his true value. Jack took him up by commenting that artists enjoy discussing art with each other. Bill said: 'Yes, I'm a bit of an artist, I like to dabble.' Jack then remarked that football fans also enjoyed talking football, but Bill ignored this, and went on to speak of the appreciation of painting. Jack said, however, that only very well-educated people could really appreciate art. This was a distinctly unencouraging comment to make to Bill, who was very sensitive about his lack of formal education. However, a precarious *rapprochement* was established when at Jack's suggestion it was agreed that anyone could appreciate music.

Now, Bill wished to see himself and to be seen as a superior person with superior tastes, but he was never able to discount entirely the feeling that he counted for nothing with those who really mattered. He felt he could never 'really' become anybody, because, despite anything he himself might do, he was made of the same flesh and blood as his parents, and they were 'empty' people, as he called them, 'dull and uninteresting'. He saw the analyst, however, as possessing all the attributes of the ideal 'other'. The analyst was strong, educated, understanding, and appreciative. Unfortunately, the analyst was also seen as able to

distinguish the true from the fake. In his despair of being able to be a genuine person himself, he felt empty; and therefore in need of 'getting' something from the analyst. He often expressed disappointment that 'in this technique' the analyst did not give him more. The analyst, as the 'ideal other', was thus also frustrating and unsatisfying. His 'technique' was 'unexciting', 'empty, dull, and uninteresting'. In his own despair at being himself, he saw the analyst more and more as a dense, opaque being, who embodied in his being all that he lacked in his. The analyst's penis became the emblem of all the analyst's attributes, which he longed to incorporate in himself. This situation found expression in his passive homosexual longings towards the analyst, which he revealed in a letter to the analyst. The others in the group avoided a potential passive homosexual orientation towards the analyst by carefully seeing themselves as men, for whom the relevant other was always a woman. Another way of putting this is that their frightened evocation of the presence of women, albeit, one notes, the presence of their absence, was a 'defence' against homosexual intra-group tensions becoming apparent.

Like Bill, Jack felt that his parents had given him nothing, or not enough, or the wrong sort of things. He, however, was full of aspirations to be a good husband and parent himself, and a good patient. He wanted to *give* all the time, and had already displayed his need to do this by the role he had assumed in the group. However, to his dismay, he had found himself developing an intense resentment at persons he 'loved', namely the persons he felt impelled to give to. He defined his 'neurosis' as the inability to not stop hating those he loved.

These two people, Bill and Jack, began to form a collusive relationship. It was based on each 'confirming' the other in a false position. Bill was 'confirmed' by Jack both in his illusionary superiority and in his false premise of his 'essential' worthlessness: Jack, in his illusion of being a 'giver'. The collusive endorsement of each other's false self is the precise obverse of genuine confirmation. Their closeness was a counterfeit of genuine friendship.

Jack, in his own eyes, was an independent, hard-headed, matter-of-fact, down-to-earth business man, and extremely heterosexual, although women for him, in fact, were simply those absent presences he talked about with 'the boys': he was in no one's debt and was very generous.

Bill dreamt of far-away places where things could be beautiful and people were more refined. People were vulgar and coarse. They knew nothing of the finer things. What, one might imagine, would Jack give him that he wanted, or vice versa?

One thing was clear in listening to them – that when they talked together Jack was never more 'Jack' (as Jack saw himself) and Bill was never more 'Bill' (as he saw himself). Each tended to 'confirm' the other in his illusionary identity. Each concealed from the other what could break this up. At least, this was so until Bill began to imply that he had sexual feelings towards Jack. This Jack could not take.

The group behaved 'as if' the pairing were sexual, and thereby denied that it could be *really*, along with all the other aspects of the collusion they chose not to notice. Then Jack asked Bill what he thought about when he masturbated. Bill said, after some coaxing, that he sometimes thought about a man. Jack quickly said that he always thought of women, and immediately checked with the others that they did the same. This was his way of writing off Bill. This was one of the points at which the collusion had to end, although the rejection was itself part of the collusion. The sexual 'other' for Jack had to be feminine and he could not stand in turn being the sexual other to a man.

The other group members each reacted in his own way to this phase in the relationship. The clearest expression of anxiety came from a man who had always thought of his parents having damaged each other, and had fears of hurting his wife. He was particularly sensitive to Jack's aggression towards Bill. For instance, during one of their somewhat sadomasochistic exchanges, in which Jack was attacking Bill for not going to football matches, this man broke in to say he was feeling quite faint,

as he had done the night before at the sight of a boxing match on television when one boxer gave the other a terrible beating.

Richard was the only one of the group who seemed to wish the collusion to go on indefinitely. He was an extremely schizoid individual. Once, recently, he had left his books to have a walk in the park. It was a beautiful evening in early autumn. As he sat watching the lovers together, and the sun setting, he began to feel 'at one' with the whole scene, with the whole of nature, with the cosmos. He got up and ran home in a panic. It was a relief when he 'came to himself' again. Identity for Richard could be sustained only in isolation. Any relationship threatened him with loss of identity – being engulfed, fusing, merging, losing his separate distinctiveness. He could only *be* by himself, but the sight of people together fascinated him. It seemed so impossible for him, so remote from what was within his reach, that one could hardly say he was jealous or envious in a straightforward sense. His inner self was empty. He longed to be together with someone. But he felt he could not be a separate person if he got attached to someone else. If he were attached to anyone, he would be a clam, or a leech, as he expressed it. He was 'outside' life. He could only be a spectator. When Jack asked him an 'objectively' harmless question his reply was that he felt his existence threatened by questions, and immediately asked Bill what he thought. He could only be a *voyeur* of life. This, we may note, points to the fact that such collusive pairing was something that Richard was not *able* to do. It is at least doing something together with another person (playing the same game). At any rate, it implies some measure of freedom from the worst fears of destroying or being destroyed by the other, which can virtually preclude the possibility of relatedness to anyone on any terms.[1]

It is in terms of a basic frustration to the self's search for collusive complements for its false identities that Freud's dictum that

[1] The foregoing account is a modified version of an earlier publication (Laing and Esterson, 1958).

analysis should be conducted under conditions of maximal frustration takes on its most cogent meaning.

It is worth examining the 'place' of the therapist in such a group, and the 'place' the persons in the group feel themselves to be in relation to him.

One basic function of a genuinely analytical or so-called existential therapy must be to provide a setting in which as little as possible impedes the patient's capacity to discover his own self.

Without beginning to enter into a full discussion of this, one can comment on one aspect of the therapist's position. The therapist's intention is not to allow himself to collude with the patients in adopting a position in their phantasy-system: and, alternatively, not to use the patients to embody any phantasy of his own.

The group was frequently dominated by phantasy, which found expression in the issue of whether or not the therapist had the answer to their problems. Their problem in those phases of the group was to decide if he had or had not 'the answer'; and if he had, how to extract it from him. His function was not to collude in either the group's illusionment or its disillusionment, and to try to articulate the underlying phantasy systems.

A large part of the art of therapy is in the tact and lucidity with which the analyst points out to the patients the ways in which they seek collusion to maintain their illusions or to preserve themselves from delusions. If the dominant phantasy in this particular group was that the therapist had 'the answer' and that if they could get 'the answer' they would not be suffering, the therapist's task, like a Zen Master's, is to point out that their suffering is not due to their not getting 'the answer' from him, but is in the state of desire they are in, whereby they posit the existence of 'an answer' and are frustrated because they do not seem to be getting it. As Burtt (1955) says of the teachings of Hsi Yun, a Zen Master of about A.D. 840, his intention was to make the questioner aware 'that the real difficulty is not so much in his questions being unanswerable as in his continuing in the state of mind that leads him to ask

them' (p. 195). Illusionment or disillusionment may equally be based on the same phantasy. There is 'an answer' somewhere: or there is 'no answer' anywhere. The person has retained the same parameter and he has merely shifted himself along it.

It is in this sense that therapy must be conducted under conditions of maximal frustration – frustration, that is to say, of those desires, impulses, intentions, etc., that are components of projects formed on the basis of phantasy unrecognized as such, and in that sense, are 'inauthentic'.

CHAPTER X

Existential position as a function of the action of the self

> *Nam in omni actione principaliter intenditur ab agente, sive necessitate naturae sive voluntarie agat, propriam similitudinem explicare; unde fit quod omne agens, in quantum huiusmodi, delectatur, quia, cum omne quod est appetat suum esse, ac in agendo agentis esse quodammodo amplietur, sequitur de necessitate delectatio . . . Nihil igitur agit nisi tale existens quale patiens fieri debet.*
>
> DANTE[1]

One speaks of a person being in a false position, or in an untenable position. The data on interpersonal experience and action in the above pages offer numerous instances of persons who put themselves and others, and are in turn put by others, into various false or untenable positions. Anyone attempting the development of a theory of 'alienation' in this sense, will be wise to give ear to two sets of colloquialisms, which point in the first place to the *position* the person can put himself or the other into, and in the

[1] 'For in every action what is primarily intended by the doer, whether he acts from natural necessity or out of free will, is the disclosure of his own image. Hence it comes about that every doer, in so far as he does, takes delight in doing; since everything that is desires its own being, and since in action the being of the doer is somehow intensified, delight necessarily follows . . . Thus, nothing acts unless by acting it makes patent its latent self.' As quoted and translated by Arendt (1958, p. 175).

second place, to the position the person may be put into by the actions of others. In this chapter we shall start from the everyday common-sense knowledge that a person can put himself into a false or untenable position, and in the following chapter we shall begin to consider ways in which he may be put in a false or untenable position by others. Position is used throughout, of course, primarily in an existential sense, rather than in the sense of economic or social-class position, or position in some other hierarchial system.

Everyday speech abounds in expressions about the self's contribution to its own experience of its 'place' or 'position' in the world. One says that a person 'puts himself into' his acts, or that he is *not* 'in' what he says or does: a person's actions are commonly seen as ways he has of losing himself, or forgetting himself, of getting out of himself, etc. He may seem to be 'full of himself' or 'beside himself', or 'to have come to himself' again after 'not being himself'. All these expressions, or attributions about the person's relation to his own actions, are used quite 'naturally' as the language of 'the man in the street'. In them, the central issue is the extent to which the act is seen or felt to *potentiate* the being or existence of the doer, or the extent to which the action, as Dante puts it in the above quotation, makes patent the latent self of the doer.[1] One of the central issues in an existential analysis of action is to what extent and in what ways the agent is disclosed, wittingly or unwittingly, intentionally or unintentionally, in and through his actions.

In this respect, everyday speech gives us a number of clues that we might be wise to follow up. For instance, it hints that there may be a general law or principle that a person will feel himself to be going forward when he puts himself into his actions, presuming this to be equivalent to self-disclosure (making patent his true self), but that if this is not so, he will be liable to feel that he is 'going back' or at least is stationary, or 'going round in circles',

[1] We need not contend, however, that the primary intention of the doer must be to disclose himself.

or 'getting nowhere'. In 'putting myself into' what I do, I lose myself, and in so doing I become myself. The act I do is me, and I become 'me' only in and through action. Also, there is a sense in which a person 'keeps himself alive' by his acts; each act can be a new beginning, a new birth, a re-creation of oneself, a self-fulfilling.

To be 'authentic' is to be true to oneself, to be what one is, to be 'genuine'. To be 'inauthentic' is to not be oneself, to be false to oneself: to be not what one appears to be, to be counterfeit. We tend to link the categories of truth and reality by saying that a genuine act is real, but that a person who habitually uses action as a masquerade is not real any more.

Thus, in everyday speech, and in our 'existential' theory which, to adapt a remark of William James, is but an unduly obstinate attempt to think clearly about these issues, 'authentic' action or 'inauthentic' action can be viewed from many angles: from each angle different features come into the foreground.

The intensification of the being of the agent through self-disclosure, through making patent the latent self, is the meaning of Nietzsche's 'will to power'. It is the 'weak' man who, in lieu of potentiating himself genuinely, may counterfeit his impotence by dominating and controlling others, by idealizing physical strength or sexual potency, in the restricted sense of the capacity to have erections and to ejaculate.

The act that is genuine, revealing, and potentiating, is felt by me as fulfilling. This is the only genuine fulfilment of which I can properly speak. It is an act that is me: in this action I am myself. I put myself 'in' it. In so far as I put myself 'into' what I do, I become myself through this doing. I know also that the converse is true, when I feel 'empty', or am haunted by futility. In the light of such knowledge of myself, I am compelled to see the other. I suspect 'frantic' activity in another. I sense that *he* senses in his actions a lack of any intrinsic meaning; that in clinging to external formulas and dogmas he is sensing his own emptiness. I expect that such a person will envy and resent others. If, from my knowledge of myself, I see him as not fulfilling himself by not

projecting himself into his own future, I am alert to various false ways in which he will try to fill up his emptiness, e.g. he fills himself with others (introjective identification) or lives vicariously by living through the lives of others (projective identification). His 'own' life, therefore, comes to a stop. This is the man who may be seen to be going round in a circle, to be in a whirl, to be going everywhere and getting nowhere.

An existential phenomenology of action is concerned with the movements, the twists and turns of the person as one who puts himself, in different ways and more or less, into what he does. It is concerned, also, to elucidate on what one bases such judgements (attributions), whether about oneself or the other. The psychiatrist, for instance, may base a diagnosis of schizophrenia as much on what he considers the patient's relation to his actions to be, as on the acts themselves (viewed as 'behaviour' pure and simple). Here, I have contended that the psychiatrist or psychopathologist, under the illusion that he sees the other person in a so-called 'objective' way, has failed to subject his diagnosis by 'signs' and 'symptoms' to a critical examination, and is indeed condemned by these 'clinical' categories to an impoverished and twisted view of the other. Such 'clinical' categories as schizoid, autistic, 'impoverished' affect, 'withdrawal', etc., all presuppose that there are reliable, let alone valid, criteria for making attributions about the other person's relation to his actions. There is in fact an almost total lack of such reliable and/or valid criteria.

In my view, it is due to no simple oversight that such is the case, and the situation is unlikely to be remedied by someone setting up so-called 'reliability' studies. The estrangement of *our own theory* from *our own actions* goes deep into our historical situation.

In our daily interpersonal discourse, we employ at least two notions of 'truth'. The one is the 'truth value' of a proposition; the relation of words to things. And yet if *A* says '*p* is the case', what is usually termed the 'truth value' of the proposition '*p* is the case' has nothing whatsoever to do with *A*'s relationship to this

proposition. However, in daily discourse, it is frequently more important for us to gauge *A*'s relation to the proposition, i.e. whether A is telling the truth, whether he is lying, or whether he is deceiving himself, and so on.

Heidegger (1949) has contrasted the natural scientific concept of truth with a notion of truth which has its origins in pre-Socratic thinking. Whereas in natural science truth consists in a correspondence, an adaequatio, between what goes on *in intellectu* and what goes on *in re*, between the structure of a symbol system 'in the mind' and the structure of events 'in the world', there is another concept of truth which is to be found in the Greek word ἀλήθεια. In this concept, truth is literally that which is without secrecy, what discloses itself without being veiled. It is necessary to consider the practical interpersonal implications of this concept in terms of telling the truth, lying, pretending, equivocating, etc., whether by word or action. One is constantly seeking to gauge the person's 'position' in relation to his own actions.

When one sees actions of the other in the light of this latter form of truth or falsehood, one says that a man is truthful or 'true to himself' when one 'feels' that he means what he says, or is saying what he means. That is to say, his words, or for that matter his other ways of expressing himself, are 'true' expressions of his 'real' experience or intentions. Between such 'truth' and a lie there is room for the most curious and subtle ambiguities and complexities in the person's disclosure/concealment of himself. For instance, one may say with confidence, 'His smile gave him away', or, 'That expression is just put on', or, 'That rings true', and so on. But what has been revealed, what concealed, and to whom, in the Gioconda smile, in the ' 'twixt earnest and joke' of Blake's angel, in the infinite pathos – or is it apathy – of a Harlequin of Picasso? The liar (he deceives others without deceiving himself), the hysteric (his deception of himself is anterior to his deception of others), the actor (*his* actions are not 'him'), the hypocrite, the impostor (like Thomas Mann's Felix Krull, absorbed into the parts he plays), are at the one time the exploiters

and victims of the almost unlimited possibilities in self's relation to its own acts, and of the lack of final assurance that one can attribute correctly the other's relation to his actions.

> 'We look', writes Hegel (1949, p. 345), 'at a man's face and see whether he is in earnest with what he says or does. Conversely, however, what is here intended to be an expression of the inner is at the same time an existent objective expression, and hence itself falls to the level of mere existence which is absolutely contingent for the self-conscious individual. It is therefore no doubt an expression, but at the same time only in the sense of a sign, so that to the content expressed the peculiar nature of that by which it is expressed is completely indifferent. The inner, in thus appearing, is doubtless an invisible made visible, but without being itself united to this appearance. It can just as well make use of some other appearance as another inner can adopt the same appearance. Lichtenberg, therefore, is right in saying: "Suppose the physiognomist ever did have a man in his grasp, it would merely require a courageous resolution on the man's part to make himself again incomprehensible for centuries." '

'I am going to the House of my Lord,' the Christian slave would say when challenged by the Roman soldier. Such intentional equivocation plays upon the inexorable separateness *between* man and man, that no love, nor the most complete experience of union, can completely or permanently annul.

Thus, when a man's words, gestures, acts, disclose his real intentions, one can say that they are genuine and not counterfeit, in the sense that a coin is genuine and not counterfeit. His frown of disapproval, his word of encouragement, his smile of pleasure, are the true and genuine currency of himself.

Phenomenologically, therefore, actions may be attributed (by self to self, or self to other) as revealing or concealing, 'strong' or 'weak', 'fulfilling' or 'emptying': making 'real' the being of the doer, or making him more 'unreal', and so on.

The man who does not reveal himself or is not 'seen' by the others when he does, may turn, in partial despair, to false modes of self-disclosure. The exhibitionist who shows off his body, or a part of the body, or some highly prized function or skill, may be despairingly trying to overcome that isolation and loneliness which tends to haunt the man who feels his 'real' or 'true' self has never been disclosed to and/or confirmed by others. The man who compulsively exhibits his penis can be in 'bad faith'. He can be substituting self-disclosure through this 'thing' rather than through living. Analysis of such a person can show that it is not just this thing that he would have others gasp at, but him – the person – whose actions are 'weak', 'phoney', unreal, and impress no one. He wishes to put his would-be 'true' self into his penis. But instead of making patent his latent self and thereby 'intensifying' his being, he holds himself in (inhibits himself) and holds out (exhibits) his penis.

The person in a false position may not be aware of being 'in' such a position; indeed, perhaps it is only to the extent that he is not completely 'in' this position, that he is not totally estranged from his 'own' experience and actions, that he can experience his position *as false*. However, perhaps without his realizing it his 'life' may come to a stop. With no real future of his own, he may be in that supreme despair which is, as Kierkegaard says, not to know he is in despair. He is in despair because he has lost 'his own' future, and so can have no genuine hope or trust in a personal future. The person in a false position has lost a starting-point of his own from which to throw or thrust himself (i.e. to pro-ject himself) forward into his own future. He has lost the place. He does not know where he is or where he is going. He cannot get anywhere however hard he tries. In despair, just as one place is the same as another, so one time is the same as another: the future is the resultant of the present, the present is a resultant of the past, and the past is unalterable.

Such realizations may break through in dreams. We stated above that no matter how hectically a person may move about in

space or engage in business or affairs, if all this is 'false', 'he', existentially considered, is not getting anywhere; he is simply 'in a whirl', 'going round in circles'. No matter how hard he runs he is never moving from the same spot. Such a man has the following dream:

> 'I was at the seashore. There were sands and barren rocks. I was alone. I ran into the sea and swam and swam, until, almost exhausted, I came to another shore, where there were again sands and barren rocks. Once more I was alone. I found that it was the same place.'

The person who dreamt this was living at the same time an apparently successful, active life. Existentially, however, all his energetic swimming, to the point of almost exhausting himself, was only getting him to the same place.

Perhaps the commonest paranoid 'delusion' is that there is a plot afoot directed 'against' the self. The self attributes to the others the intention to oust the self from his position in the world, to displace him and replace him. How this is to be effected is often left vague and 'unsystematized'. Dostoevsky (1958), in his early story, *The Double*, described clearly how Golyadkin, a minor civil servant, comes to believe that it is on this basis that his 'enemies' are plotting against him. As Golyadkin writes in a letter to a colleague (pp. 164–5):

> 'In conclusion, I beg that you will convey to these persons that their strange pretensions, and their ignoble and chimerical desire *to oust others from the places that they occupy by their very existence in the world, and to supplant them* [italics mine], are deserving of consternation, contempt and pity, and what is more, qualify them for the madhouse. Moreover, attitudes such as these are strictly forbidden by law, and in my opinion quite justly so. There are limits to everything, and if this is a joke, it is a pretty poor one. I will say more – it is utterly

immoral, for I venture to assure you, Sir, that my own ideas about keeping *one's place*, and these I have amplified above, are purely moral.

I have the honour to remain, Sir,

Y. Golyadkin.'

Dostoevsky, however, not only describes the phenomenology of Golyadkin's displacement from the 'position' he occupies by his very existence in the world, and of his eventual replacement by the double, but he shows how this 'delusion' is intimately connected with Golyadkin's own secret intention *not to be himself*. It is therefore his own intention that he attributes to others: it is he himself who is ousting himself from the place in the world his very existence entitles him to.

Shortly before he meets his double for the first time, 'on a wet and windy St. Petersburg night', Dostoevsky states:

> '. . . Any detached and impartial observer who at that moment merely glanced at Mr. Golyadkin and saw his anguished step, would immediately have been imbued with a sense of the appalling horror of his misfortunes, and would certainly have said he had the look of a man wishing to hide and escape from himself. And that is exactly how it was. We will say more: *at that moment Mr. Golyadkin wanted not only to escape from himself, but to annihilate himself completely, to return to dust and cease to be*' (p. 73, italics my own).

After his encounter with his double, he discovers that this man is ousting him in every possible way from his position in existence until he completely takes his place in the world. Yet just before he is taken away to the madhouse, Golyadkin has a glimpse of his 'pernicious twin', whom he sees for a moment as 'apparently not pernicious at all, not even his twin, but a stranger and a perfectly amiable person in his own right' (p. 246).

While he had come to feel that this other was ousting him

completely from his place in the world, while he was dreaming that the whole of St. Petersburg was peopled by other Golyadkins, he himself had been intentionally seeking to annihilate himself, seeking not to be himself. This was the project at the very heart of his existence, which was a secret even from himself, that he remained unable to grasp, unable to realize. Thus he would at other times experience himself as 'a man losing control of himself, losing sight of himself, on the point of vanishing for ever...' (p. 220). Yet, even at this point, when he is about to cease to exist and he is ruined, he again intentionally tries a further method of not being himself in a last effort to remedy the situation.

> '"That's the best thing," he thought, "I'd better try a different approach. This is what I'll do – I'll just be an outside observer, and nothing more. I'm an onlooker, an outsider, that's all, I'll say. And whatever happens it won't be me who's to blame. That's it. That's how it will be now."
>
> And our hero did indeed do as he had decided and went back, and went back the more readily for having, thanks to a happy thought, become an outsider.
>
> "It's the best thing. You're not answerable for anything, and you'll see what you should" ' (p. 242).

CHAPTER XI

Existential position as a function of the action of the others

Where you are there arises a place.
RILKE

Children should be seen and not heard.

Now it is clear, clinically, and from one's 'common sense', that the person can put himself into a false position, ultimately into an untenable position. The corollary to this must now be examined in more detail: that the self *can be put* into a false position, ultimately into an untenable position, by the actions of the others.

Colloquial speech again comes to our aid, by supplying us with another set of expressions. Consider, for instance, such terms as: to put someone on the spot; to give someone room to move; to have no elbow-room; to be put in an awkward position; to make someone feel small; to know where one is with someone; to pull someone or to be pulled in opposite directions; to turn the screw on; to know where one stands; to take the ground from under someone's feet, etc.

To understand fully the one person's experience of his 'position' obviously one would require a knowledge of the actions of the others, as well as of his own actions and his own imagination/phantasy of the others.

For instance, the 'room' to move a person feels that he has is

obviously related in some way both to *the room that he gives himself and the room he is given by others.*

This is dramatically illustrated by the report of a policeman who watched a little boy running round a block of flats. After the boy had run past him on his way round the block for the twentieth time, the policeman finally asked him what he was doing. The boy said he was running away from home, but his father wouldn't let him cross the road! The boy's 'free space' was curtailed by his 'internalization' of this paternal injunction. The space, geometrical and metaphorical, of both adult and child, is highly structured by the influence of others, one way or the other, all the time. This is 'common sense', a truism, but it becomes necessary to state this when a phenomenology of space neglects to give due weight to this factor.[1] Therefore, we shall proceed to consider some aspects of the contribution that the others make to the person's existential position. In this respect, we shall find that a number of the considerations raised earlier in this volume come together in the examination of what is involved in being in a 'false' position and, ultimately, in being in an 'untenable' position.

If we wish to understand the 'position' from which a person lives, it is highly relevant to understand what original sense of his place in the world he grew up with: his own sense of his place will have been developed partly in terms of what place he will have been *given* in the first instance by the 'nexus' of original others.

Every human being, whether child or adult, seems to require *significance*, that is, *place in another person's world.* The adult as well as the child seeks a 'position' in the eyes of others. The adult and the child seek, in addition, room to move. Few people, however, could be imagined who would choose unlimited scope within a nexus of personal relations, if their freedom had no significance. Would anyone choose freedom if nothing he did mattered to anyone else? It seems to be a universal human desire to wish to

[1] In particular I refer to the pioneering studies of Minkowski (1933, 1953). The same criticism is applicable to Binswanger (1958). The contributions of both these authors to the phenomenology of space are considered at some length by me elsewhere (Laing *et al.* in preparation).

occupy a place in the world of at least one other person. Perhaps the greatest solace in religion is the sense that one lives in the Presence of an Other. Most people at some time in their lives seek the experience, whether or not they had been fortunate enough to find it in the first instance, of occupying *first* place, if not the only significant place, in at least one other person's scheme of things. No theory of man-woman relations, for instance, can afford to neglect the fact that each does not seek in the other simply an object whereby he or she can be gratified, but a person that he or she can gratify, that a man and a woman require of each other in a love affair not only another object whereby they can reach tumescence and detumescence more or less synchronously, but a physically intimate and exciting experience together, whereby each can have the experience not only of possessing the whole world through possessing the other, but of being, if only for a few moments, the whole world for the other.

In the typical paranoid ideas of reference, the person feels that the murmurings and mutterings he hears as he walks past a cinema queue are about him; when he is alone in a pub, a burst of laughter behind his back is at some joke that has been cracked about his appearance; everyone in the coffee bar where he is sitting is being careful not to look at him, etc. However, what is discovered when one gets to know such a person more than superficially is that what tortures him is not so much his delusions of reference, but his harrowing suspicion that he is of no importance in fact to anyone.

Thus, what constantly preoccupies and torments the paranoid person is basically the precise opposite of what may at first be most apparent. He appears to be persecuted by being so much the centre of everyone else's world, but he is preoccupied with the thought that he never occupies first place in anyone's affection. He is constantly, therefore, jealous – that cold jealousy, however, that Minkowski (1933) has described in the paranoid – a jealousy without love, a jealousy which occurs within a context of a profoundly different 'lived space' from that of the 'normal' man.

In the absence of being able to experience himself as having any significant place for another person, he develops a delusional place for himself in the world of others. In doing so, he lives not so much in his own world, but in the place he supposes he occupies in the *others'* world, that is, he no longer fully lives in his own world, but by magical projection he lives in the world of others.

In the case of Peter (Laing, 1960), I described a young man who was preoccupied with guilt *because* he occupied a place in the world, even in a physical sense; he could not realize (i.e. make real to himself) that he had the right to have any 'presence' for others. While unable to 'realize' his actual presence, he filled in this gap in his realization of himself as a person by phantasy experience that tended to become more and more delusional.

One of the peculiar aspects of his childhood was that his physical presence in the world was entirely or almost entirely ignored. No 'weight' was given to the fact that he was in the same room while his parents had intercourse. He felt very strongly that though he was physically cared for (he was well fed and kept warm, and underwent no physical separation from his parents during his early years), he was consistently treated as though he did not 'really' exist. What he thought was perhaps worse than the experience of physical separation was to be in the same room as his parents and totally ignored, not malevolently, but just through sheer indifference. For as long as he could remember, he had felt uneasily guilty simply at having any presence for others, or rather at wanting to be present for others. Instead of real-izing a sense of his own presence for others, he developed a delusional sense of his presence for others. He believed that to make his presence felt he would have to go to such extremes that no one would want to have anything to do with him, and he made it therefore the central enterprise of his life to be nobody.

What characterized this man's 'primal scene' memories and his phantasy mode of participating in this prototype of a triadic situation was not simply his jealousy and anger, and subsequent

guilt and anxiety, but his sense of *shame and despair* that he did not seem able to make any difference to his parents in any way. He was simply an additional part of the furniture of their lives which they cared for in the way they took care of their other material possessions.

That is, Peter (p) had no place in the world in his own eyes, and he did not believe that he occupied a place in o's world either. The situation was schematically as follows: p's view of o's view of him is that o does not see him. On the basis of these gaps in the existential fabric of his (p's) identity, he constructs a delusional presence for o. This is what he 'complains' about; i.e. that he stinks in other people's nostrils.

The most common axis, as it were, along which the paranoid person makes his complaint is the view of p that p attributes to o, i.e. $p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow p)$.

So far we have considered the negative possibility when the person experiences, not the absence of the presence of the other, but the absence of his (p's) presence as other for the other. He is haunted by the other who does not act towards him in any way whatever, who does not wish to seduce him, rape him, steal anything from him, love him, or destroy him. The other is there, but he is not there to the other.

We shall now consider some of the ways in which the others do act on the self with particular reference to sanity and madness.

CHAPTER XII

Driving the other crazy

We now wish to proceed further to more detailed considerations of ways and means whereby one person's position may be rendered *untenable* by others.

There have been a number of studies in this field in the last decade. At present about the only conclusion to be drawn from this work is that we are still trying to determine what to look for in the first place. Here, I shall consider in detail only two of these studies, both of which I think are of key importance.

The first is an article by Searles (1959), 'The Effort to Drive the Other Person Crazy'. This may well come to be regarded as a classical pioneering contribution to this subject.

In this paper, Searles lists six modes of driving the other person crazy, six modes of what we may call *schizogenesis*. In Searles's view, '. . . each of these techniques tends to undermine the other person's confidence in his own emotional reactions and his own perception of reality'. The six modes that Searles lists can be formulated as follows:

1. *p* repeatedly calls attention to areas of the personality of which *o* is dimly aware, areas quite at variance with the kind of person *o* considers himself or herself to be.
2. *p* stimulates *o* sexually in a situation in which it would be disastrous for *o* to seek sexual gratification.
3. *p* simultaneously exposes *o* to stimulation and frustration or to rapidly alternating stimulation and frustration.

4. *p* relates to *o* at simultaneously unrelated levels (e.g. sexually and intellectually).
5. *p* switches from one emotional wave-length to another while on the same topic (being 'serious' and then being 'funny' about the same thing).
6. *p* switches from one topic to the next while maintaining the same emotional wave-length (e.g. a matter of life and death is discussed in the same manner as the most trivial happening).

Searles emphasizes that, in his conviction, 'the striving' to drive the other person crazy is predominantly at an unconscious level, and that it is but one ingredient in a complex of pathogenic relatedness which it is well beyond the capacity of either one or both of the participants to control fully.

In general, he believes that he can make the following formulation. '. . . the initiating of any kind of interpersonal interaction that tends to activate various areas of his personality in opposition to one another – tends to drive him crazy (i.e. schizophrenic).' It seems to me that this formulation does not do justice to the data that Searles has brought forward. To say that the initiation of any kind of interpersonal interaction that tends to foster emotional conflict in the other person tends to drive him crazy, is not sufficiently specific. There are many ways in which one person can confront another with two or more possible courses of action that are in conflict with each other. To imply that to promote conflict is, in itself, liable to disintegrate the person put into conflict, seems to confuse conflict that may sharpen a person's being with what may sabotage and destroy the self, unless the person has quite exceptional means of coping.[1] I would say rather that what is in question is the initiation of any kind of

[1] Consider, for instance, the techniques used by Laura to undermine the Captain's self-confidence in Strindberg's *The Father*. They are convincing enough, but they could only be effective with someone who had little or no resistance to them. This, of course, opens up the study of techniques of coping with or resisting schizogenic situations. Techniques of brainwashing, which Searles likens to schizogenic activity, and techniques of resisting being brainwashed are only partially relevant here. Although they certainly wish to undermine his ideology, the brainwashers are not trying to drive their victim crazy, and if they do, they will have failed.

interpersonal reaction which tends to foster *confusion*; which makes it difficult for the one person to know 'who' he is, 'who' the other is, and what is the situation they are 'in'. He does not know 'where he is' any more.

Examples that Searles gives of various modes of driving the other person crazy are all of this order. For instance, he gives an example of a man who persistently questions 'the adjustment' of his wife's younger sister so that she becomes increasingly anxious. In questioning his sister-in-law he repeatedly calls attention to areas of her personality which are quite at variance with the person she considers herself to be.

This is an example of interpersonal disjunction. The sister-in-law's system of self-attributions, her self-picture ($p \rightarrow p$), is disjunctive with the other's view of her as implied in the man's questions. Interpersonal disjunction need not necessarily be the occasion for a person to split himself, unless that person feels obliged to comply with the other's view of him, that is, to take up the position ascribed to him explicitly or implicitly by the other. In this case, the sister-in-law might well not know 'where she was' any more. To question her 'adjustment' might be to attribute falsity to her 'adjusted' actions. This could indeed be extremely disturbing, although it could also be clarifying and integrative. But she could become very confused if the other both 'accused' her of not being adjusted, and from the opposite perspective 'cast doubts' on and questioned the validity of actions which were 'adjusted', as though to accuse her of not being adjusted and of being adjusted simultaneously.

The situation where one person stimulates the other sexually in a setting in which it would be disastrous for that person to seek gratification for his or her aroused sexual needs again involves not only conflict but also confusion, i.e. *doubt about how the 'situation' itself has to be defined.*

Searles notes that in innumerable instances 'we have records of the parent of a schizophrenic patient who behaved in an inordinately seductive way towards the child, thus fostering in the

latter an intense conflict between sexual needs on the one hand, and regular super-ego retaliations . . . on the other. This circumstance,' he says, 'can be seen as productive of a conflict in the child between, on the one hand, his desire to mature and fulfil his own individuality, and, on the other hand, his regressive desire to remain in an infantile symbiosis with his parent, to remain there at the cost of investing even his sexual strivings, which constitute his trump card in the game of self-realization, in that regressive relationship.'

Here again, one appears to have before one a very special kind of conflict, in which the person in conflict cannot see clearly the 'real' issues that face him. I here assume that the 'real' issues are of the order outlined by Searles. For the child, the issue may be: Do I love my mother or father or not? What must I do to keep him or her alive? Am I selfish if I do not respond to their way of loving me? Am I ungrateful if I do not comply with what they wish of me? What to Searles, and to myself, are the 'real' issues are *unrealized*. In so far as the patient becomes aware that the basic choice before him is: 'to be himself' at the expense of losing his symbiotic relationship with the parent: or, to keep a symbiotic relationship that has many seducing aspects to it, at the expense of losing his autonomy, the issue becomes more clear-cut. But it is still inevitably shrouded by the phantasy system he shares with his parents. The nature of this phantasy system, its content, and its modality as phantasy are often apparent to a perceptive outsider. The content of the phantasy is often known in part by the participants. What they seldom *realize* is that its modality is phantasy. Thus, a mother tells her daughter who has confided some of her problems to her school-teacher, and in doing so has spoken to someone other than her mother about herself for the first time in her life, 'You'll see what a mess you'll get into, if you tell strangers these things. No one loves you like I do – no one understands you like I do.' This daughter came to believe that everyone in the world besides her mother was a stranger, and every relationship with these strangers, including her father, was

fraught with danger. The daughter therefore could not afford to lose her relationship with her mother because she believed, and felt, that no bond with anyone else was trustworthy. Further, she shared with her mother the belief that any intention to break the symbiosis with her mother was an expression of selfishness and ingratitude on her part for all that her mother had given her. The first problem in therapy with such patients is to enable them to look at the assumptions that are made on the basis of the phantasy systems they share with their parents. Once the conflict can be seen and faced on this new level, which involves, firstly, emergence from a phantasy dread of separation, in which the act of leaving is felt as suicide and/or murder, and, secondly, disarticulation of the confusion of the parents' phantasy with the patient's experience, the patient is likely to have got clear of this particular possibility of psychosis. Authentic conflict is *integrative*. Inauthentic conflict is disintegrating. To the extent that the 'issue' is inauthentic, to the extent that the 'real' or 'true' conflict has not yet come into focus and the 'true' choices are not, therefore, available, to that extent is a person in danger of becoming psychotic. In so far as he can realize the 'real' issue and the real conflicts between the choices before him, to that extent he may well be subject to suffering and heartbreak, but will not thereby be 'twisted' or 'broken-down'.

In the simultaneous or rapidly alternating stimulus of other needs in addition to sexual ones, in the exploitation of the child's desire to be helpful to the parent by making chronic pleas for sympathy, in the technique of relation to the other on two quite different levels at the one time, Searles continues to give examples where the one person (*p*) confuses the other (*o*) both as to the person he (*o*) is, and as to 'the situation' he is in. The ultimate of this is when *o* is placed in an *untenable position*, that is, when no matter how he feels or how he acts, no matter what meaning he gives his situation, his feelings are denuded of validity, his acts are stripped of their motives, intentions, and consequences, the situation is robbed of its meaning for him, so that he is totally

mystified and alienated. This may be done quite unintentionally, almost as a by-product of *p*'s self-deception (or by the deceptions of a whole nexus of persons), for those who deceive themselves will be obliged to treat the other deceptively also, to disparage him when he is genuine, to accuse him of being a phoney when he is trying to comply with what he feels they want, to say he is selfish if he wants to stand on his own feet, to ridicule him for being immature if he tries to be unselfish, and so on. The person caught within such a muddle does not know whether he is coming or going: in these circumstances what we call psychosis is often a desperate effort to hold on to something, and it is not surprising in the circumstances that the something may be what we call 'delusions'.

A group of workers at Palo Alto have recently described a situation which they regard as a sequential pattern highly characteristic of the childhood of schizophrenics. Attention to this 'double bind' situation as they expound it is worth while, whether or not it is proved to be more or less specific, if exposure to it is prolonged and intense, to the development of schizophrenia.

It is a manœuvre highly relevant to our considerations, because the 'victim' is caught in a cross-current of contradictory injunctions, or of attributions having the force of injunctions, in the midst of which he can do nothing right. There is no move he can make that will meet with unqualified confirmation by the other(s).

Their thesis is stated as follows (Bateson *et al.*, 1956):

> 'The necessary ingredients for a double bind situation, as we see it, are:
>
> 1. *Two or more persons.* Of these, we designate one, for purposes of our definition, as the "victim". We do not assume that the double bind is inflicted by the mother alone, but that it may be done either by mother alone or by some combination of mother, father, and/or siblings.

2. *Repeated experience.* We assume that the double bind is a recurrent theme in the experience of the victim. Our hypothesis does not invoke a single traumatic experience, but such repeated experience that the double bind structure comes to be an habitual expectation.
3. *A primary negative injunction.* This may have either of two forms: (*a*) "Do not do so and so, or I will punish you," or, (*b*) "If you do not do so and so, I will punish you." Here we select a context of learning based on avoidance of punishment rather than a context of reward seeking. There is perhaps no formal reason for this selection. We assume that the punishment may be either the withdrawal of love or the expression of hate or anger – or most devastating – the kind of abandonment that results from the parent's expression of extreme helplessness.[1]
4. *A secondary injunction conflicting with the first at a more abstract level, and like the first enforced by punishments or signals which threaten survival.* This secondary injunction is more difficult to describe than the primary for two reasons. First, the secondary injunction is commonly communicated to the child by non-verbal means. Posture, gesture, tone of voice, meaningful action, and the implications concealed in verbal comment may all be used to convey this more abstract message. Second, the secondary injunction may impinge upon any element of the primary prohibition. Verbalization of the secondary injunction may, therefore, include a wide variety of forms; for example, "Do not see this as punishment"; "Do not see me as the punishing agent"; "Do not submit to my prohibitions"; "Do not think of what you must not do"; "Do not question my love of which the primary prohibition is (or is not) an example"; and so on. Other examples become possible when the double bind is inflicted not by one

[1] The authors state in a footnote that their concept of punishment is being refined. It appears to involve perceptual experience in a way that cannot be encompassed by the notion of 'trauma'. See especially Jackson (1957) for the development of the concept of 'covert trauma'.

individual but by two. For example, one parent may negate at a more abstract level the injunctions of the other.

5. *A tertiary negative injunction prohibiting the victim from escaping from the field.* In a formal sense it is perhaps unnecessary to list this injunction as a separate item since the reinforcement at the other two levels involves a threat to survival, and if the double binds are imposed during infancy, escape is naturally impossible. However, it seems that in some cases the escape from the field is made impossible by certain devices which are not purely negative, e.g. capricious promises of love, and the like.
6. Finally, the complete set of ingredients is no longer necessary when the victim has learned to perceive his universe in double bind patterns. Almost any part of a double bind sequence may then be sufficient to precipitate panic or rage. The pattern of conflicting injunctions may even be taken over by hallucinatory voices.'

The double bind, then, is a situation which involves two or more persons, of whom one is regarded as the 'victim'. Bateson and his associates propose that it will be difficult for a person to be sane who has been exposed to such a situation repeatedly, and indeed put forward the hypothesis 'that there will be a breakdown in *any individual's* ability to discriminate between Logical Types whenever a double bind situation occurs' (italics my own).

One person conveys to the other (perhaps not openly) that he should do something, and at the same time conveys (again, perhaps not openly) by other channels that he should not do it, or even that he should do something else incompatible with it. The situation is sealed off for the 'victim' by a further unavowed injunction forbidding him or her to get out of the situation, or to dissolve it by commenting on it. The 'victim' is thus in an 'untenable' position. He cannot make a single move without evoking a threatened catastrophe. For example:

A mother visits her son, who has just been recovering from a mental breakdown.[1] As he goes towards her

(a) she opens her arms for him to embrace her, and/or
(b) to embrace him.
(c) As he gets nearer she freezes and stiffens.
(d) He stops irresolutely.
(e) She says, 'Don't you want to kiss your mummy?' – and as he still stands irresolutely
(f) she says, 'But, dear, you mustn't be afraid of your feelings.'

Thus, he is responding to her invitation to kiss her, but her posture, freezing, tension, simultaneously tell him not to do so. However, the fact that she is either frightened of a close relationship with him, or for some other reason does not want him actually to do what she is pretending she wants him to do, cannot be openly admitted by the mother, and remains unsaid by both her and the son. However, the son responds to 'the unsaid situation' created by the unspoken message, 'Although I am holding my arms out for you to come and kiss me I am really frightened of you doing so, but can't admit this to myself or to you, so I hope you will be too "ill" to do so.' However, when he does not do so, she pretends that she is quite simply wanting him to kiss her, and in fact implies that the reason why he is not kissing her is not because he is perceiving her anxiety lest he do so, or her command not to, but because he does not love her. When he does not answer, she implies further that the reason why he is not kissing her is because he is afraid of either his sexual or aggressive feelings towards her. The mother conveys, therefore, in effect, 'Do not embrace me, or I will punish you' *and* 'If you do not do so, I will punish you.' Moreover, the 'punishment' will itself be secret.

[1] This is a slightly modified and abridged version of an example given in the paper under notice. One should note that the analysis of the interaction is incomplete, since the description of the situation given does not include observations on ways in which the patient may have been inducing the double-binding behaviour in the mother. For instance, between steps (b) and (c) above, the patient in moving towards his mother may have succeeded, by minute nuances in his expression and walk, in putting into his mother *his* fear of closeness with her, so that she stiffened.

Such is an example of what on the surface is a very simple incident, but the suggestion is that a person exposed in babyhood predominantly to situations of this kind will find it difficult to emerge into adult life without such trauma, both to his self system and his prototypical schema of the other, that he will be predisposed to going mad.

It is perhaps necessary to re-emphasize that *we are using the mother-child relationship throughout simply for convenience.* We are not intending to give a balanced account of this as a relationship, but merely to use it to illustrate the types of interaction we are trying to elucidate. *We are trying to describe how one person or 'a nexus' of persons can act towards another person.* How one person 'acts towards' another is not necessarily synonymous with his motives, or intentions, or with what effect he actually has on the other. We are largely restricting ourselves to an exposition of these issues in dyadic terms, whereas there must always be at least three persons (*sic:* Weakland, 1960) involved 'in reality' and 'in phantasy'. But one step at a time.

One must constantly remember, of course, that the child *from babyhood* may put his parents into untenable positions. This may occur in the early baby-mother interaction where the baby cannot be satisfied. It cries 'for' the breast. It cries when the breast is presented. Its crying is intensified when the breast is withdrawn. A mother unable to 'click with' or 'get through' to such a baby may become intensely anxious, and feel hopeless as a mother. She then withdraws from the baby in one sense, while becoming over-solicitous in another sense. Double binds are usually mutual.

The double-bind hypothesis is really a number of hypotheses, some of which seem more sound operationally than others. The authors seem in some doubt about what 'frames of reference' to employ or develop in casting their theory. They use the potentially fruitful though at present vague expression 'modes of communication', but they try to develop this formulation in terms of Logical Types. But it is doubtful if the Logical Type

theory they employ is any longer viable. Again, they may have broken ground in describing 'modes of communication' certainly found frequently in the families of schizophrenics. To what extent double binds of what kind go on in other families is still unknown.

The work of the Palo Alto group, along with the Bethesda, Harvard, and other studies, has, however, *revolutionized* the concept of what is meant by 'environment', and has already rendered completely obsolete most of the discussions on the relevance of 'environment' to the genesis of schizophrenia.

One of the most interesting possibilities is the link up of this type of interaction theory with recent biological theory, particularly in the area of the earliest child-parent interactions.

For instance: a young child tends to run away from danger. In flight from danger it runs to the mother. At a certain stage, flight to the mother and clinging to her may be a pre-potent behavioural pattern in reaction to danger. It is possible that 'flight' and 'clinging' to the mother are compounded of component instinctual response systems in the child that can be modified at certain stages to only a limited extent.

Let us suppose a situation wherein the mother herself is the object that generates danger (for whatever reason). If this happens when the pre-potent reaction to danger is 'flight' *from* danger *to* the mother – will the infant run *from* the danger or run *to* the mother? Is there an instinctual 'right' thing to do? Suppose it clings to the mother. The more it clings, the more tense the mother becomes: the more tense, the tighter she holds the baby: the tighter she holds the baby, the more frightened it gets: the more frightened, the more it clings.

This is certainly the way many patients describe their experience of being unable to leave 'home', that is, the original other or nexus of persons in his or her life. They feel that their mother or their family is smothering them. They are frightened and want to run away. But the more frightened they are of being smothered, the more frightened they are to run away. They cling for security

to what frightens them – they act like someone with a hand on a hot plate, who presses his hand harder against it instead of drawing it away; or like someone who begins to step on a bus just when it begins to move away, and 'instinctively' clutches the bus, the nearest and most dangerous object, although the 'sensible' thing to do is to let go.

One patient, Cathy, a girl of seventeen, was practically wholly concerned with a struggle to leave her parents. She was completely unable to do so in any real way, but developed a manic psychosis in which she 'left' her parents in a psychotic sense by denying that her parents were her real parents. Even though she was put in a mental hospital, this did not stop her from escaping from the hospital repeatedly *in order to run home*, where she would arrive at any hour of the day or night and have to be dragged away again, for as soon as she got there she screeched and screamed that her parents were not letting her lead her own life; that they were dominating her in every possible way.

She began to be seen by me daily while in hospital. Far from feeling that I might be a help in her gaining some genuine freedom, or in making any use of the opportunities placed before her, she quickly began to attribute to me the same power-crazed drive to dominate and destroy her that she attributed to her parents. But even so, she did not avoid me. On the contrary, in order to make her point, she would follow me around shouting at me that I would not let her alone. I am reminded of the patient of Whitehorn (1958) who, while gripping his thumb in her fist as in a vice, shouted at him, 'Let go my hand, you brute.'

In the midst of her transference psychosis Cathy dreamed: 'I am running as hard as I can away from the hospital, but the hospital, and you in it, is a gigantic magnet. The harder I try to run away, the more I am pulled towards it.' This phenomenon seems to be similar to some of the well-known hypnotic phenomena.

It may be that there is an instinctual 'tropism' to the mother which does not meet with an adequate terminating response in the mother. If Bowlby (1958) and others are correct, when an

instinctual response system in the human being does not meet an appropriate terminating response in the other, then anxiety will arise. If, however, the instinctual response to anxiety at some stage is to cling to the mother, then the more anxiety generated by the failure of an adequate terminating response in the mother (possibly a highly 'confusing' reaction, such as a smile with tense facial muscles, soft arms and harsh voice, etc.) the more the 'need' for the mother is stimulated.

There may be something wrong with the 'fit', with the interaction between mother and the baby, so that within this context each starts to 'double-bind' the other. It is of course possible to postulate that an instinctual response is so genetically determined that it does not know how to end itself, even when the terminating response is given, but goes on like a Sorcerer's Apprentice, unable to break its own spell. Prolonged intense clinging may begin to evoke 'double-bind-like' behaviour on the mother's part. She is stimulated by it and exhausted. She wants the infant to continue and to give it up – she acts 'ambivalently'.

Behaviour of this kind on the mother's part may contribute in turn to the infant's developing a second level of disturbance, in that it may cease to respond to the mother at all, or begin to respond in simultaneously inconsistent ways, or in one stereotyped way, etc.

But speculation can go too far ahead of information. Here is a field of research lying wide open, capable of yielding fundamental data that are probably essential components in the structure of a comprehensive theory of schizophrenia.

Anyone who thinks that such a theory is possible in the present situation is deluding himself.

CHAPTER XIII

Further types of ambiguous and incompatible attributions and injunctions

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The attributes one ascribes to a person serve both to define him and, in doing so, to put him, as one says, in a particular position. Attributions may so allocate a person to a particular position, may so 'put him in his place', that they have in effect the force of injunctions.

Attributions made by *p* about *o* may be conjunctive or disjunctive with attributions made by *o* about *o*. A simple example of disjunctive attributions would be: *p* makes a statement about *o*'s relation to his testimony, with which *o* disagrees.

p 'You are lying.'
o 'No, I'm telling the truth.'

Some attributions can be tested by consensual validation, but many things attributed by *o* to *p* cannot be tested by *p*, certainly while *p* is a child. Such are, for instance, the global attributions of the form 'You are worthless'. There is no way that the recipient of such an attribution can disconfirm it by his own actions, unless he gains control of the permanently 'one-up' position[1] which gives the person in it the right to arbitrate in such matters.

What the others attribute to *p* implicitly and/or explicitly will

[1] For a clever and by no means facetious study of psycho-analysis as a form of gamesmanship, see Haley (1958a). See also Haley (1958b).

therefore necessarily play a decisive part in forming *p*'s sense of his own agency, perceptions, motives, intentions, etc.

Stephen for a period of his life lost all track of what his motives and intentions were because he lived with a mother who became for a period 'paranoid'. She was always reading motives and intentions into actions that he originally felt did not have the ascribed motives and intentions, but finally his 'own' motives and intentions did get hopelessly entangled with those attributed to him. He knew, for instance, that if he cut his finger his mother would say that he had done so to upset her, and he himself felt, knowing that this would be her construction, that he could no longer be sure whether such was not indeed his intention when he did cut his finger. Such a situation engendered in him compulsive doubts about his 'motives' even for wearing a tie he liked, but which 'annoyed' his mother. 'You are wearing that to annoy me – you *know* I don't like ties like that.'

It is in the area of discrepancy between the person's 'own' intentions and the intentions attributed to him by the other(s) that issues such as secrecy, deception of the other or deception of oneself, equivocation, lying, or telling the truth, come into play, and it is in terms of such discrepancies that much guilt and shame have to be understood (being a fake, being a phoney, etc.). True guilt is guilt at the obligation one owes to oneself to be oneself, to actualize oneself. False guilt is the guilt felt at not being what other people feel one ought to be or assume that one is, if this does not coincide with what one's own true possibilities are.

A person has achieved something if he is capable of realizing that he is not necessarily who the other takes him to be. But awareness of a discrepancy between the identity he already has or wishes to achieve, between his being-for-himself and his being-for-the-other, is often extremely painful. As indicated, particularly in Chapter X, there is a strong tendency for some people to feel guilt, anxiety, anger, or doubt if their self-attributions are disjunctive with attributions made about them by the other. Guilt arises particularly when attributions are taken as imperatives.

Joan's mother sent her a blouse for her twentieth birthday. The blouse had interesting characteristics. It was two sizes too big for her; and it was not the sort of blouse she would have chosen for herself. It was sexually very plain. It cost her mother more than her mother could afford, and it could not be changed in the shop in which it was purchased. One might expect Joan to be disappointed or angry. Instead, she felt embarrassed and guilty. She did not know what to do with herself because *she* was not the right size for the blouse. She ought to have been the size for the blouse, and she ought to have been able to like it: that is to say, she was ashamed because she felt she ought to have 'fitted' the notion her mother had of who she was. In this case her mother confirmed the girl in the fact that she had a body with breasts, but did not endorse the actual body that she had. During her puberty, her mother had been in the habit of making remarks like: 'How are your titties coming along, dear?' Joan would feel something going to pieces inside her body when her mother spoke to her in this manner. Presenting her with a blouse that was sexless and too big was equally ambiguous and confusing. This girl was physically frozen and dared not be attractive and vital if her mother could not confirm her in this. The blouse, in being unattractive, implied an attribution or definition: 'You are an unattractive young woman.' This attribution implied an injunction, 'Be what I say you are.' At the same time, however, she was mocked for being unattractive. Joan ended by wearing the blouse with a feeling of helpless, despairing confusion.

Attributions, therefore, facilitate or undermine the development of a feasible sense of self. Consider, for instance, the following variations of a basic theme of childhood. A little boy runs out of school to meet his mother.

1. He runs up to his mother and gives her a big hug, which she responds to and says, 'You love your mummy?', and he gives her another hug.

2. A little boy runs out of school; his mummy opens her arms to hug him, but he stands a little away. She says, 'Don't you love

your mummy?' He says, 'No.' And she says, 'Well, all right, let's go home.'

3. A boy runs out of school; his mother opens her arms to hug him and he stands away. The mother says, 'Don't you love your mummy?' He says, 'No.' She gives him a smack and says, 'Don't be cheeky.'

4. A boy runs out of school; the mother opens her arms to hug him and he stands a little way off. The mother says, 'Don't you love your mummy?' He says, 'No.' The mother says, 'But mummy knows you do, darling', and gives him a big hug.

In (1), given the absence of hidden ambiguities, there is maximal mutual confirmation and conjunction. However, in (2) the mother's initial desire or expectation that the boy will respond complementarily to her initial action is not fulfilled by the boy. She asks a question which may be ambiguous – in that it may be both cajoling and an attempt to elicit information about his feelings. In its latter aspect, the mother implies that the boy has feelings about her, and that he naturally knows what they are, but that she does not always know 'where she is' with him. He tells her that he does not love her. She does not dispute his testimony, and does not manifestly reject him. One may speculate on whether she 'leaves him to get on with it' or 'lets the matter drop', or finds ways of punishing him or of having revenge, perhaps by affecting indifference, or seeks ways to win him over to her, and so on. There may be some time before he will know where he is in turn with her.

In (3) the boy is treated again as a separate being. His actions and testimony are not invalidated, but there is evidently a complex set of rules in operation governing when to say what about one's real feelings. He is taught a lesson that it is sometimes better to be polite or dutiful than to be too honest. However, the boy quickly knows where he stands. If the smack is not followed up by other more complicated manœuvres, the choice before him is relatively straightforward. If you want to keep out of trouble, at least keep your mouth shut. Moreover, he knows that,

although his mother has defined her reason for smacking him as his 'cheek', she is also likely to be hurt and angry. He knows that his feelings and what he says can make a difference to her, and that if he hurts her by what he does, she does not impose a burden of guilt on him by making ambiguous appeals to remorse on his part.

In (4) the mother is impervious to what the boy actually says he feels, and counters by attributing to the boy feelings that overrule the boy's own testimony of what his feelings are. This form of attribution deliberately sets out to make unreal the feelings that its 'victim' experiences as real. In this way the disjunction is abolished.

Examples of attributions of this order are:

'You are just saying that. I know you don't mean it.'

'You may think you feel like that, but I know you don't really.'

A father says to his son who was being bullied at school and had pleaded to leave:

'I know that you don't really want to leave, because no son of mine is a coward.'

A child persistently exposed to this type of attributions in his original nexus, and to inconsistent or even completely incompatible attributions about the same thing, may have great difficulty in knowing what his intentions or feelings are any more. He no longer knows himself when he feels one thing or the other, or how to define what he is doing.

Stephen's mother, for instance, would blame him for anything that she messed up. She once came through from one room to another where he was sitting, and hit him. She had just broken a plate in the other room. Her reasoning appeared to be that she had broken the plate because she was worried about him, i.e. he was worrying her, i.e. he had caused her to break the plate.

When he was ill, his mother took some time to forgive him, because he was 'doing this' (being ill) to upset her. Finally,

almost anything he did was construed as an effort to drive her crazy. By this time (adolescence) he had lost all track of where his authentic responsibility began and ended.

What effect *can* one person have on another anyway? Socrates remarked that no harm could be done to a good man. Hitler is reputed to have stated that he never deprived anyone of freedom, only of liberty. A prisoner in a cage could be supposed to retain his 'freedom', but to have lost his liberty. I can so act as to define the situation in which the other person has to act, but can I do more than this? If the other person says, 'You are breaking my heart', can I in any sense be 'doing' this to him? If one person acts in a particular way, and the other person says, 'You are driving me crazy', is this really a valid statement of the deed set in action by his agency? Yet it is everyone's experience that we act on each other in different ways. When do we draw the line? By what criteria do we draw the line?

A girl has a boy-friend. She goes out with another boy. The first boy says that she is tormenting him. He is certainly tormented 'by' her action, but she may not have gone out with the other boy with any intention of tormenting her boy-friend. If not, she could hardly be said to be tormenting him. But suppose that she did intend to torment him. Is she actually, in fact, tormenting him any more because she intends to torment him and he is tormenting himself, than if she is not intending to torment him, and he torments himself?

When Cordelia is invited by Lear to say to him the things she knows will make him feel happy, and she refuses, is she hurting him, is she being cruel, if she says what she knows will make him feel hurt? In what sense do I do to the other what the other person says I am doing to him, if I do what I want, with other intentions, knowing, however, that the 'effect' my action will have on him will be other than I intended, because *he* says so?

In many areas in the life of a child action comes first, and the child is taught what he intends, by being told what his actions 'mean'.

A boy of eight, who lived at home, had an older brother, much favoured by his parents, who was due to come home from his public school for the vacation. The boy had repeated dreams of his brother being run over by a car or a lorry on his way home from school. When he told his mother this, his mother told him that this showed how much he loved his brother because he was concerned about his safety. His mother persistently attributed love of the older brother to the younger brother in the face of what to many people would be repeated indications to the contrary.

The younger brother 'believed' his mother when she told him that he 'loved' his older brother.

Attribution, of course, works both ways. That is to say, the child is constantly attributing many things, good and bad, love and hate, to his parents, and is constantly conveying to them how he is experiencing them. One of the most important variables in the child-parent relationship involves what attributions the parents are responsive or impervious to, what they accept or reject, what angers, flatters, or amuses them, and so on. Also, what counter-attributes are provoked in what circumstances. For instance, 'cheeky' is often the attribute for a child who attributes to his parents things that he is forbidden to attribute.

Two contradictory and simultaneous attributions, one perhaps explicit, the other implied, may also carry concealed injunctions. This is one form that the double bind can take. For instance, when Margaret[1] was fourteen, her mother had two names for her – her old name 'Maggie' and a new one 'Margaret'. To be called Margaret meant she was a big girl now, and should be having boy-friends and not hanging about mother's apron strings; to be called 'Maggie' meant she was still a little baby and always would be, who had to do what her mummy told her. One evening, when at six o'clock the girl was standing outside with some of her teen-age friends, her mother shouted from a window upstairs, 'Margaret, come upstairs immediately.' This quite confused the girl. She felt everything draining from her and began to

[1] I am indebted to Dr. A. Esterson for supplying this example.

cry. She did not know what was expected of her. In being called 'Margaret' she was allocated a grown-up or, at least, an adolescent role. This allocation carried a concealed injunction that she should now behave as an independent entity, but the sentence following reverted to defining her as a little girl, in that it allocated to her behaviour appropriate to 'Maggie'. As Maggie, she was to obey without thought or without question any order she was given. Everything drained from her because she had not sufficient 'inner' resources to cope with being given two mutually exclusive roles to execute simultaneously.

The Injunction 'Be spontaneous'

We have been able to observe in adolescent and adult schizophrenics that the injunction 'Be spontaneous' is frequently made, explicitly or by implication, by their parents. One finds the mother who may be very responsive to *re*actions that she has herself evoked, but who seems to be unable to react in a confirmatory way to initial evocative actions (evocations) on the other's part. One discovers, then, a characteristic double bind based on this issue. The mother and/or father *commands* the child to be spontaneous; she sees that the child lacks spontaneity, she tells the child to be spontaneous, but is unable to confirm any genuine acts of spontaneity, which she disconfirms by imperviousness or tangential response: or she recognizes the piece of behaviour as such, but refuses to admit that it was 'meant'. There are many ways of invalidating and undermining the acts of the other. They may be regarded as either bad or mad actions, or they will be accepted in a sense not intended by the doer, and rejected in the sense actually intended. They may be treated as mere *re*actions in the other to the person who is their 'true' or 'real' agent, as somehow a link in a cause-effect chain whose origin is not in the individual. There is an inability to perceive the otherness of the other. The parents may seek to extract credit or gratitude from the child by making out that the child's very capacity to act is due to them. Hence, the more the child does anything apparently

freely, the more he or she is, as it were, operating as a result of the grace and favour of the parents. The more the child achieves; the more it has been given; the more it should be grateful. One might say that this can in some circumstances be a salutary phantasy for a child to achieve, and usually a pernicious one for parents to harbour.

The person who is ordered to be spontaneous is placed in a false and untenable position.

The child who is ordered to be spontaneous may seek to comply with the order by doing what is expected of him. This counterfeit self may be accepted as genuine. However, the child may in turn be accused of dishonesty because he is not doing what he really wants. But if he says what he really wants, he is told that he is warped or twisted, or that he only thinks he wants this.

A highly successful professional painter was very slick at life-like portraiture, but could not bring himself to do abstracts. He remembered he used to make black messy drawings when he was a young child. His mother, who was a painter herself, of insistently sweet flower arrangements and suchlike, greatly valued 'free expression'. She never told him not to make messes, but always told him, 'No, that's not *you*.' He felt awful inside when she said this. He felt quite empty, and somehow ashamed and angry. He subsequently learnt to paint and draw what he was told was 'him'. When he remembered the full force of his feelings about those early drawings, which he had lost touch with without having actually forgotten, he started right back at his black messes after over thirty years. Only when he did so could he say that, without knowing it, he had felt empty and twisted all his life. He felt what he called a 'cleansing' shame because he had betrayed his own truest feelings. He contrasted this clean shame, in the strongest terms, with the 'shameful emptiness' he had felt when he had been told that these messy drawings were not really 'him'.

Some people undoubtedly do have a remarkable aptitude for keeping the other person tied in knots. This seems to be done for the most part entirely 'unconsciously', and it is striking how

difficult it often is for the author of such ploys to see them, or admit to them.

A wife complained persistently in a joint interview that her husband never let her 'have her own way'. He said, 'I am sure my wife recognizes that whatever she wants really for her good I will do if at all possible.' He was quite unable to see why his wife felt exasperated to the point of wanting to scream or smash something, in the face of the *persistent* undermining of her position in similar ways.

If linguistics (Firth, 1957) is the study of what people say and hear in what situations, one requires co-operation at this point from the linguistic analyst (e.g. Pittenger, Hockett, and Danehy, 1960 and the logician).

The same arrangement of words, grunts, or groans, smiles, frowns, or gestures can function in many possible ways according to context. But who 'defines' the context? The same form of words, for instance, can be used as a plain statement of fact, as an accusation, as an injunction, as an attribution, as a joke, as a threat, etc.

For example, *p* (husband) may say to his wife (*o*), 'It's a rainy day.' This statement could be intended in various ways:

1. Simply to register and share the fact that it is a rainy day.
2. *P* might have agreed reluctantly yesterday to go for a walk with *o*, instead of going to see a film. By saying now that it's a rainy day he is saying, 'Thank God we will not be going for a walk. I'll probably get to see my film.'
3. *P* might be implying, 'Because it's rainy, I don't think you should go out', or, 'Perhaps you do not want to go out (I hope) since it's raining' or, 'I feel depressed. I don't want to go out, but if you insist, I suppose I shall have to.'
4. *P* and *o* might have had an argument yesterday about how the weather was going to turn out. The statement might mean therefore, 'You're right again' or, 'You see how I'm always correct.'

5. The window may be open. The statement may imply that *p* wishes *o* to close the window,

etc.

These multiple possible ambiguities are features of ordinary discourse. In the above example the simple statement about 'the day' could imply a question, a reproach, an injunction, an attribution about self and/or other, etc. In fairly 'straight' talk, such ambiguities are present, but a statement (manifestly, say, an ostensive statement, 'Look, rain') can be taken up by the other in terms of an intended implication. This implication may then in turn be admitted, or, if the implication attributed was not actually intended, it can be honestly disclaimed. Frank and honest exchanges can carry in them a great number of resonances, and the participants can still 'know where they are' with each other. However, at the other end of a theoretical scale, conversations can be characterized by the presence of numerous disclaimed, unavowed, and contradictory implications. One paranoid patient's expression for statements of this kind was 'insinuendoes'. For example:

(i) An injunction will not be made as an injunction, but as an ostensive statement.
Ostensive statement: 'It's cold.'
Injunction: 'Put on the fire.'

(ii) An injunction will be an implied attribution.
Injunction: 'Ask Jones for his advice on this.'
Attribution: 'You are a bit of a fool.'

(iii) A threat will be made as an offer of help.
Offer of help: 'We'll arrange a nice change for you.'
Threat: 'If you don't stop behaving like this, we'll send you away.'

(iv) An accusation will be concealed as an expression of sympathy.

Sympathetic statement (attribution): 'Your nerves are on edge.'
Accusation: 'You are behaving atrociously.'

But if the other replied to each of the above statements by:

(i) 'That's *really* an order', or
(ii) 'You're really saying I'm a fool', or
(iii) 'You're really saying that, if I don't behave myself, you'll say I'm mad and get me put away', or
(iv) 'By saying you know I couldn't help myself, you find it necessary to avoid holding me responsible because you think I did harm'.

The original person will deny that he has implied anything, and, moreover, imply perhaps that the other was wrong (mad or bad) to think anything was implied. This implication in turn will be made only to be disavowed. However, the next time a plain statement is made, and the other reacts to it as a plain statement, the other will be accused of being insensitive, or of wilfully refusing to 'know perfectly well' what was meant. The explicit level may or may not be consonant with the implicit level, while on the implicit level itself the one person may convey two or more contradictory implications at once: for instance, he may imply that he understands how the other feels, while acting as though he did not, or vice versa.

Three or four persons in a closed nexus will maintain a *status quo* which suits them, if necessary forming a collusive alliance to cope with anyone who threatens the stability of the nexus.

In a family nexus in which any statement or gesture functions as something quite different from what it 'appears' to be, since no action can be 'trusted' to 'mean' what it seems to, one has little hope, as an outsider, of discovering what is 'really' going on. There may be almost no clues in the manifest content of interaction. To an outsider, 'nothing' may be going on. (The manifest

exchanges can be almost unbelievably boring, repetitious, and concerned only with trivia.) This is in a sense true, since the energy of the nexus is used to prevent anything going on. One asks the patient a question in the presence of her family. A 'sympathetic' aunt chips in, 'Tell the doctor what's upsetting you, dear.' The latent injunction is, 'Don't comment. You are being told not to do or be what you are being told to do or be.'

Mother (*p*) and daughter (*o*) were ostensibly trying to remember the circumstances around the daughter's last admission to hospital. This admission had followed on an incident when the daughter had attacked the mother with a knife. The mother kept asking the daughter why she (*o*) had 'used a knife' at her. Now, one might think that although a full understanding of this action would be difficult, it would be very difficult not to extend the statement 'used a knife at' a little, for instance, to say that this was an 'attack', perhaps 'because' she was angry, no doubt 'in order' to hurt her. The remarkable thing about the exchange between mother and daughter was that neither could define the action as an attack, much less mention any possible motive or intention. It seemed to the mother that it must have been an entirely senseless piece of behaviour, confirming the fact that the daughter was 'mental'. However, she continued to press the daughter to remember why she had acted in this way. The daughter, more and more frantically, kept insisting that she could not remember. The mother persisted that the daughter could remember, that she had to remember, that she was only pretending she could not remember, that it would be so helpful to the daughter and to everyone if she could remember, and that the mother above all wanted her daughter to remember because only in this way could the daughter help the doctor to help her (*o*).

The daughter here was placed in an untenable position, since the mother, while repeatedly exhorting the daughter to remember, repeatedly told her that she could not or would not. The most consistent injunction that appeared to be conveyed through this phase of the interaction was that the daughter, for the mother's

sake, should pretend that she could not or would not remember, and should, again for the mother's sake, submit both to the mother's accusations against her (*o*) for wilfully not remembering, and to the mother's sympathy for not being able to remember. When, with some support from the doctor, the daughter began to talk about the incident, the mother quickly picked on any flaws in her recollection to demonstrate to her that her memory was quite untrustworthy, but that she was not to blame herself for this, because it seemed that her 'illness' had destroyed her memory.

This example offers us, among other things, a further instance of the double-binding effect of contradictory attributions. That is, the mother both in effect orders the daughter to remember, and in effect orders her not to remember. The means used to do this are not direct injunctions but attributions. She attributes to the daughter, on the one hand, a capacity to remember (so that if she does not remember, she is being bad) when her mind is a blank, while, on the other hand, attributing to her an unsound memory (so that anything she does remember confirms the fact for the mother that she is mad). In effect, then, as soon as anything comes into her mind the mother attributes both badness and madness to the daughter in oscillation. If the daughter tries not to be bad she is defined as mad. If she tries to avoid being mad she is defined as bad. The only partial way for the daughter out of this untenable position might be for her to falsify her perceptions and her own memory to fit in with what her mother might want her to pretend to perceive or to remember.

This example offers us also an illustration of a further point – the technique of withholding of attributions – here of motive and intention. It is not easy to split the experience of being attacked by a person with a knife from attributions about the cause (for instance, 'You must have hated me at that time') or intention ('You must have wanted to hurt me or frighten me'), and this despite deeper obscurities as to why the daughter might have been angry or wanted to hurt or to frighten her mother. But, in

this instance, both the sane mother and the psychotic daughter are ostensibly unable to raise the possibility that the daughter could have been angry with the mother, even though she attacked her with a knife. To the mother, this theoretical possibility was not even plausible. To her, motives and intentions were the prerogative of sane people. Not only could her daughter not have had a reason for her action, but her action was hardly an act at all. It did not even amount to an 'attack'. There are, of course, many reasons why the mother could not admit to herself that her daughter might have had any reason, however 'subjective', to attack her, but our focus here is on the ways the mother's defences operate by undermining the daughter's 'position', and by stripping the daughter's behaviour of motive, intention, and even agency.

With ordinary, more or less sane people, one can, and one does, take the statement 'You are a bastard' to be almost the same thing as the statement 'I am angry with you', but to a borderline patient it need not be the same thing at all. He may well have lived through his childhood in a nexus in which two such statements are not almost equated, but are kept almost entirely dissociated. It could be a tremendous relief as well as a revelation for such a patient (*p*) to hear the other attribute to him anger towards himself (*o*).

The statement 'You are a bastard' could be:

(i) a factual statement about your parents;
(ii) an attribution about you;
(iii) a statement about *my* feelings about you;
(iv) serious or playful.

Many 'borderline' and schizophrenic patients are constantly puzzling over what is 'meant' by any statement, for any statement can indeed function in innumerable ways. Was he being funny? Was he telling me something about my parents? Perhaps I should ask to see my birth certificate. Is he testing me to see if I'm 'touchy'? etc., etc. It is no longer constructive to see such preoccupations as 'ruminative thought disorder', and to seek the

'cause' exclusively in organic 'pathology'. The capacity to speak English is organically determined – so is the capacity to speak French, and the confusion of many bilingual children. Some people are taught several 'languages' in the same language. The difficulty that some persons have in 'knowing', or 'having the feel of', what 'language' or 'mode of communication' four words may be in, may be due to having grown up in a nexus where black sometimes 'meant' black, and sometimes white, and sometimes both. With some schizophrenics who have come to place qualified trust in me, I have worked out in considerable detail, and to their great relief, some of the ways they were muddled over different implications in ordinary language. Their ruminations are unsuccessful and tragically unrecognized efforts to try to get these things straight. They are themselves confused and cannot be expected to understand what they are groping towards. Their efforts at neologisms, amendments of syntax, queer intonation, splitting of words, even syllables, and equivalent operations applied to the whole non-verbal 'language' of expression and gesture, require to be re-evaluated, and much further research is required into the original system of communication to which they were first exposed.

The following are four glimpses of such interactions in families.

1. Mother, father, and patient (male, hospitalized paranoid schizophrenic of twenty) were arguing. The patient was maintaining that he was 'selfish', while his parents were telling him that he was not. The doctor asked the patient to give an example of what he meant by 'selfish'.

PATIENT: Well, when my mother sometimes makes me a big meal and I won't eat it if I don't feel like it.

Both his parents were silent. He had evidently carried his point.

FATHER: But he wasn't always like that, you know. He's always been a good boy.

MOTHER: That's his illness, isn't it, Doctor? He was never ungrateful. He was always most polite and well brought up. We've done our best for him.

PATIENT: No, I've always been selfish and ungrateful. I've no self-respect.

FATHER: But you have.

PATIENT: I could have if you respected me. No one respects me. Everyone laughs at me. I'm the joke of the whole world. I'm the joker all right.

FATHER: But, son, I respect you, because I respect a man who respects himself.

2. A boy of seven had been accused by his father of having stolen his pen. He vigorously protested his innocence, but was not believed. Possibly to save him from being doubly punished as a thief and as a liar, his mother told his father that he had confessed to her that he had stolen the pen. However, the boy still would not admit to the theft, and his father gave him a thrashing for stealing and for lying twice over. As both his parents treated him completely as though he both had done the deed and had confessed it, he began to think that he could remember having actually done it after all, and was not even sure whether or not he had in fact confessed. His mother later discovered that he had not in fact stolen the pen, and admitted this to the boy, without, however, telling his father. She said to the boy, 'Come and kiss your mummy and make it up.' He felt in some way that to go and kiss his mother and make it up to her in the circumstances was somehow to be completely twisted. Yet the longing to go to her, to embrace her, and be at one with her again was so strong as to be almost unendurable. Although at that time he could not, of course, articulate the situation clearly to himself, he stood his ground without moving towards her. She then said, 'Well, if you don't love your mummy I'll just have to go away,' and walked out of the room. The room seemed to spin. The longing was unbearable, but suddenly, everything was different yet the same.

He saw the room and himself for the first time. The longing to cling had gone. He had somehow broken into a new region of solitude. He was quite alone. Could this woman in front of him have any connexion with him? As a man, he always thought of this incident as the crucial event in his life. It was a deliverance from bondage, but not without a price to pay.

There is a good deal bound up in this incident. One sees here how endless are the ways in which a person can be trained to trust or mistrust his own senses, and the senses of others. To select only one aspect for special comment, the injunction 'Come and kiss your mummy and make it up' is worth examining more closely. It seems to imply:

1. I am in the wrong.
2. I order you to make it up with me.

But it is ambiguous, for the injunction may be an entreaty masquerading under the false colours of a command. The mother may be pleading for forgiveness from the boy:

1. I did everything for your own good.
2. I appeal to you to make it up with me.

But the appeal, if it is an appeal, is backed up by 'blackmail'. 'I am still the stronger. If you don't kiss me, it does not matter all that much to me, and I will leave you.' One could hardly say here that the situation is 'defined' simultaneously in many different ways. Rather there are innumerable flitting 'insinuendoes' – multiple small fractional implications. The person placed in a situation of this kind cannot make a meta-statement articulating any one of the multiple 'insinuendoes' without exposing himself to ridicule. Yet they are all there, and have a decisive cumulative effect. A few of these 'insinuendoes' are perhaps:

1. I am in the wrong.
2. I want to make it up with you.
3. Please make it up with me.
4. I order you to make it up with me.
5. After all I did everything for your own good.
6. You ought to be more grateful for what I have done for you.

7. Don't think your father will believe you.
8. You and I know everything. No one else knows anything.
9. You know you need me. I don't need you.
10. If you keep this up, I shall leave you. That will teach you a lesson.
11. Well, there we are, it's all over now. Let's forget about the whole thing.
12. Mummy is not angry with you, for all the worry she had over you and that silly pen.
13. Take it or leave it. If you leave it, I will leave you.

The equations may be:

to kiss me = to love me = to forgive me = to be good.

not to kiss me = to hate me = not to forgive me = to be bad.

The reader could easily construct an alternative list of as many items again. Yet despite these intricacies, on one level it could not be simpler. On this level, there is no double bind. The boy can clearly do the 'right thing' in his mother's eyes – go and kiss her. Multiple confusing and contradictory pressures (e.g. threats and supplications) are brought to bear simultaneously on the one person. But, contrary to the double bind, it is quite clear what action will remove the pressures.

The only price to pay is the betrayal of oneself.

3. Betty's mother's favourite attribution about her was, 'She is very wise.' This meant that anything Betty actually did was very foolish, because in Betty's mother's view she never actually did the wise thing. Her mother persisted in believing that Betty knew what was 'the wise' thing to do, although by some peculiar aberration that could only be attributed to a 'mental illness' she always did the foolish thing. One of her favourite sayings was, 'She can do what she likes, of course, but I know that Betty is very wise and will always do the wise thing – that is, if she is well, of course.'

4. We have already considered Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* from the point of view of his confusion of dream,

phantasy, imagination, and 'reality'. We can add to this a further dimension – namely, the 'position' he was 'placed' in just before the murder. One has to consider whether he was in any sense 'placed' in a position that could be termed 'false', 'unfeasible', 'untenable', 'impossible'.

On the day before he murders the old pawnbroker woman, *a few hours before his 'terrible dream'*, Raskolnikov receives a letter from his mother. It is by any standards a long letter (about 4,500 words).

Its length contributes some of its essential qualities. An engulfing emotional fog comes down quickly in which it is very difficult to retain one's bearings.

When this letter was read to a group of eight psychiatrists, all testified to feelings of tension in themselves; two reported that they felt physically stifled; three reported that they felt marked visceral tensions. The quality of the letter that evokes this intense response is inevitably partially lost in the following extracts, but they enable some of the 'machinery' to become apparent.

The letter begins (pp. 48 et seq.):

> 'My dear Roddy, . . . it is over two months now since I had a good talk with you by letter, and I was so distressed about it that it kept me awake at night, thinking. But I know you won't blame me for my unavoidable silence. You know how much I love you, dear. You are all we have in the world, Dunya and I; you are our only hope of a better and brighter future . . .'

She goes on to express concern about his career and their financial difficulties.

> '. . . But now, thank God, I think I shall be able to send you a little, and as a matter of fact we can congratulate ourselves on our good fortune now, which piece of good news I make haste to share with you. But, first of all, my dear Roddy, I wonder if you know that your sister has been living with me for the last six weeks and we shall never part again . . .'

We do not in fact discover what the good fortune is until about two thousand words later, for Mrs. Raskolnikov goes into a detailed account of her daughter Dunya's recent humiliations in the house of the Svidrigaylovs. She has not told Roddy before this because

> 'If I had told you the whole truth, you would, I dare say, have thrown up everything and have come to us, even if you had to walk all the way; for I know your character and your feelings very well, and *I realise that you would never allow your sister to be humiliated.*'

Dunya's character had been besmirched by Mrs. Svidrigaylov, who had branded her as an immoral woman who was having an affair with her husband. However, Dunya was finally publicly vindicated, and

> '. . . everyone all of a sudden began to treat her with marked respect. All this was the chief reason for the quite unexpected turn of events, which I may say has completely changed our prospects. For I must tell you now, dear Roddy, that Dunya has received an offer of marriage, and that she has already given her consent, of which I now hasten to inform you. And though all this has been arranged without your advice, I am sure you will not be cross with me or your sister, for I hope you will agree that it was quite impossible for us to postpone Dunya's answer till we received a reply from you. And, besides, I don't expect you could have made up your mind without being present here yourself. It all happened like this . . .'

There follows a description of her fiancé, Peter Luzhin, 'a civil servant with the rank of a counsellor', which is a masterpiece of its kind.

> '. . . He is a distant relative of Mrs. Svidrigaylov's, and it was

indeed she who was chiefly instrumental in arranging the match . . . He had coffee with us, and the very next day we received a letter from him in which he very courteously asked for Dunya's hand in marriage and begged for a definite and speedy answer. He is a practical man and very busy, and he is now in a hurry to leave for Petersburg, so that every minute is precious to him. We were naturally very much surprised at first, for all this had happened very quickly and unexpectedly. We spent the whole of that day discussing the matter, wondering what was the best thing to do. He is a very safe and reliable man, has two official jobs, and already has money of his own. It is true he is forty-five years old, but he is fairly good-looking, and I dare say women might still find him attractive. He is altogether a highly respectable and dignified man, though perhaps a little morose and overbearing. But quite possibly that is only the first impression he makes on people. And, please, Roddy dear, I must ask you not to judge him too hastily and too heatedly when you meet him in Petersburg, which will probably be very soon, as I'm afraid you're all too likely to do if something about him does not appeal to you at the first glance. I'm saying this, dear, just in case, for I'm quite sure that he will make a good impression on you. And, besides, to get to know any man properly one must do it gradually and carefully so as to avoid making a mistake and becoming prejudiced, for such mistakes and prejudices are very difficult to overcome and put right afterwards. Mr Luzhin, to judge by many signs, is a highly worthy gentleman . . . There is of course no special love either on her side or on his, but Dunya is a clever girl and as noble-minded as an angel, and she will consider it her duty to make her husband happy, and he, too, will probably do his best to make her happy, at least we have no good reason to doubt it, though I must say the whole thing has happened rather in a hurry. Besides he is a very shrewd man, and he will of course realise that the happier he makes Dunya, the happier his own married life will be. As for a certain unevenness in his character,

certain odd habits, and even certain differences of opinion (which can hardly be avoided in the happiest marriages), Dunya has told herself that there is nothing to worry about . . . He struck me at first . . . as rather harsh, but after all, that is probably because he is such an outspoken man, and indeed I am sure that is why.'

The next section of the letter is dedicated mainly to conveying the idea that the only possible reason that Dunya is marrying this obviously insufferably smug bore and tyrant is for Roddy's sake.

'. . . Dunya and I have already decided that even now you could start on your career and regard your future as absolutely settled. Oh, if only that were so! This would be of so great an advantage to you that we must regard it as nothing less than a special sign of God's grace to us. *Dunya can think of nothing else.*'

Later:

'. . . Dunya is thinking of nothing else now. During the last few days she seems to have been in a kind of fever, and she has already formed a whole plan about your becoming Mr. Luzhin's assistant later, and even a partner in his legal business, particularly as you are studying law yourself.'

Finally, she tells him that she and Dunya are coming to St. Petersburg for Dunya's marriage, which 'for certain private reasons of his own' Luzhin wishes to get over as soon as possible.

'. . . Oh, how happy I shall be to press you to my heart! Dunya is terribly excited and happy to be able to see you so soon, and she even told me once, as a joke, of course, that she'd gladly have married Luzhin for that alone. She is an angel!'

The letter ends:

'. . . And now, Roddy, my precious darling, let me embrace you till we meet again. Bless you, my darling! Love Dunya, Roddy. Love your sister. Love her as much as she loves you, and remember she loves you very much, much more than herself. She is an angel, and you, Roddy, are all we have in the world, our only hope of a better and brighter future. If only you are happy we shall be happy. Do you still say your prayers, Roddy, as you used to, and do you believe in the goodness and the mercy of our Creator and our Redeemer? I am, in my heart, afraid that you may have succumbed to the influence of the modern spirit of godlessness. If so, then I pray for you. Remember, dear, how as a child, while your father was still with us, you used to lisp your prayers on my knees and how happy we all were then? Goodbye, or rather *au revoir*. Let me hold you close to me, my darling, and kiss you again and again.

Yours to the grave,

Pulcheria Raskolnikov.'

Raskolnikov's immediate response to the letter is given as follows:

'Almost all the time he was reading the letter, from the very beginning, Raskolnikov's face was wet with tears; but when he had finished it, his face was pale and contorted, and a bitter, spiteful, evil smile played on his lips. He put his head on his old pillow and thought a long, long time. His heart was beating fast and his thoughts were in a whirl. At last he felt stifled and cramped in that yellow cubby-hole of his, which was more like a cupboard or a box than a room. His eyes and his thoughts craved for more space. He grabbed his hat and went out, without worrying this time whether he met anyone on the stairs or not; he forgot all about it. He walked in the direction of Vassilyevsky Island along Voznessensky Avenue, as though he were in a hurry to get there on some business, but, as usual, he walked without noticing where he was going, muttering and

even talking aloud to himself, to the astonishment of the passers-by, many of whom thought he was drunk.'

Let us consider the position that Raskolnikov is placed in by this letter. He is told: 'I realize that you would never allow your sister to be humiliated.' He is also told that his sister, after one frightfully humiliating experience, is in the process of undergoing what (his mother makes quite clear) is an even greater humiliation, because whereas in the first instance she herself was blameless, in the second instance, by entering into a marriage that is clearly no more than legalized prostitution, she is corrupting her own integrity. Further, he is told that she is doing this basically only for his sake. And this he is expected to welcome.

But he has already been defined by his mother as the man who would never allow his sister to be humiliated. Is he at the same time to be a man who will allow her to sell herself for his sake? This is one untenable position.

A double bind overlapping with the above is one around happiness. 'If only you are happy, we shall be happy.' Yet in the terms that he has already been defined by his mother, could he at the same time be made happy by such a state of affairs?

He is placed in a further respect in an untenable position in respect of religion and godlessness. The whole concern of the major part of the letter is the sacrifice of one person's life, in order to provide enough money for another to get on in the world. This is taken as an index of Dunya's 'heart of gold' (a suitably ambiguous expression), and of what an angel she is.

However, what is the position as a Christian of the person placed in the position of being the recipient of this gratuity?

Dunya and her mother are only too glad to sacrifice themselves to invest in Roddy 'our only hope for a better and brighter future'. On the one hand, they quite evidently wish him to make money in order to get them out of their rut. On the other hand, they tell him that all they want from him is his happiness. Simultaneously, his mother fears that he may have succumbed to the

'modern spirit of godlessness' such as putting 'the world' before love!

To tease out all the strands in this letter, or even in the above extracts – the unavowed contradictions, the multi-dimensions of hypocrisy in it – would require an examination many times longer than the letter itself.

To summarize:

In terms of the letter itself, the person to whom it is addressed is 'placed' in at least the following positions simultaneously.

(i) Throughout, there is the implicit injunction to collude at each of the multi-levels of hypocrisy, with attributions implying the impossibility of the addressee doing so, and in fact forbidding him finally from being hypocritical (especially through the final reference to the unspoiled religion of childhood, when the words are really believed for what they are).

(ii) He ought to be happy, because then 'we shall be happy', but being the man his mother tells him he is, he could never be happy knowing that his sister was being humiliated.

(iii) Dunya is repeatedly defined as an angel. 'Look what she is prepared to do for you', in effect. This carries an implicit negative injunction against daring to define her any other way (for instance, as quite demonic) at the expense of being ungrateful. The situation is so defined that he would have to be a monster to have any feelings other than of profound gratitude to such a heavenly creature (whose heart is eighteen carat), or to put any other construction on the whole act of self-sacrifice (which is presented to him as *almost* a *fait accompli* unless he does something awful). While being given implicit grounds for hatred, resentment, bitterness, or simply unhappiness, at the same time he is being told that it is inconceivable that he could be anything but happy. To move in practically any direction, or indeed to sustain consistently one position among these numerous incompatibilities would require the addressee to become defined within the framework of the letter as spiteful and evil beyond comprehension.

(iv) He must not judge Luzhin too hastily or too heatedly when he meets him, 'as I'm afraid you're all too likely to do if something about him does not appeal to you at the first glance', although, 'I'm quite sure that he will make a good impression on you.' The letter then proceeds to make it extremely unlikely that Luzhin could possibly make anything but the worst possible impression on him.

(v) He ought to be a Christian. But if he is a Christian, he would be evil to endorse such a godless plan for gaining money and social status in the world.

(vi) He could endorse this plan if he were godless, but if he were godless, he would be evil.

His thoughts in a whirl, stifled by the obligation to be grateful for this unsolicited sacrifice, he goes out, ruminating on how to stop Dunya marrying this awful man. Through their actions, moreover, his own future is absolutely settled, unless he does something terrible, and this future is clearly impossible for him.

The letter explodes like a bomb inside him, blowing him to bits into the conquering Napoleon in imagination, the little boy in his dream, the old nag-woman in his phantasy, and a murderer in fact. Finally, through his crime and punishment, he wins through to Sonia, and Dunya finds happiness with his friend, Razumihkin. His mother dies mad.

APPENDIX

A shorthand for dyadic perspectives

Only if two people carry out reciprocally 'successful' acts of attribution can any genuine relationship between them begin.

Interpersonal life is conducted in a nexus of persons, in which each person is guessing, assuming, inferring, believing, trusting or suspecting, generally, being happy or tormented byhis phantasy of the others' experience, motives, and intentions. And one has phantasies not only about what the other himself experiences and intends, but about his phantasies about one's own experience and intentions, and about his phantasies about one's phantasies about his phantasies about one's experience, etc. There could be no greater mistake than to suppose that these issues are mere 'theoretical' complexities, of little practical relevance. There are some people who conduct their lives at several phantasy steps away from their own immediate experience or their own intentions. Family interactions are often dominated by these issues. An analyst or psychotherapist is constantly using his capacity to make, it is hoped, valid inferences about the patient's phantasies about him. The following is a short 'exercise' in this area, using a simple shorthand.

the own person p
the way the own person sees himself $p \rightarrow p$
the way the own person sees the other $p \rightarrow o$

Similarly,

the other person o

the way the other person sees himself $o \rightarrow o$
the way the other person sees the own person $o \rightarrow p$
the way the own person (p) views the other's (o) view of himself $p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow o)$
the way the own person (p) sees the other's (o's) view of him (p) $p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow p)$

Similarly,

the way the other (o) sees the own person's (p's) way of seeing himself(p) $o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow p)$
the way the other (o) sees the own person's (p's) way of seeing him (o) $o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow o)$

$>$ better than
: compared to
$\equiv$ equivalent to
$\not\equiv$ not equivalent to

The following are a few examples to illustrate the practical application of this shorthand.

Example 1

P's idea of o's idea of what he (p) thinks of himself(p)

$$p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow p))$$

A little boy is being 'punished' for having done something 'wrong'. He does not feel sorry for what he has done, but knows that he is expected to say he is sorry and to look sorry.

What is involved for him at this point is:

$p \rightarrow p$ I'm not sorry.

$p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow p)$ Mummy is angry with me. She wants me to say I *am* sorry, and she wants me to feel that I *am* sorry. I know how to *look* sorry.

So that:

$p \rightarrow p \not\equiv p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow p))$

I'm not sorry. She thinks that I am sorry.
Therefore:
'I know how to take her in.'

This is based on $p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow p))$
the boy's idea that his mother sees him as sorry.
i.e. His idea is that she will feel something like, 'Now, he's a good boy again, he *is* sorry.'

But his mother may not be taken in.

She may see that it is 'put on', but let it pass.

She will have to mobilize the following degree of sophistication at this point:

$o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow p)))$
I see that he thinks I think he is sorry.

Example 2

p's idea of o's idea of how p sees o.

$$p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow o))$$

e.g. A husband (p) thinks that his wife (o) thinks that he doesn't know that she does not love him any more.

This involves in general:

$$(p \rightarrow o)$$

his view of her.

The situation from the wife's (o's) point of view would involve:

$$o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow o)$$

the way she thinks he sees her.
She might think:

$o \rightarrow$	$(p \rightarrow$	$(o \rightarrow p))$
'I suppose	he thinks	that I love him.'

From the husband's point of view:

$p \rightarrow$	$(o \rightarrow$	$(p \rightarrow$	$(o \rightarrow p)))$
He thinks	his wife thinks	he supposes	she loves him.

Example 3

o has told a lie and has been found out. He is ashamed because he has been found out, not because he has told the lie $(o \rightarrow o)$.

p thinks o is ashamed of telling a lie:

$$p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow o)$$

o knows that p will 'melt' if he (p) thinks he (o) is ashamed:

$$o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow o))$$

so he acts as though he (o) thinks that p is still angry with him (o).

p thinks that o is acting this way because he (o) thinks that he (p) is still angry with him (o), because he (p) cannot understand how ashamed o is of himself, i.e.

$$p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow o)))$$

Example 4

$$o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow p)))$$
$$p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow p)))$$

e.g. A king and a court flatterer.

The king (p) wants someone to be frank and honest so that he can *really* know what the other thinks of him, i.e.

$$p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow p) \equiv o \rightarrow p$$

The other says, 'I can't flatter you', hoping that p will think that he (o) means this,

$$o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow p))$$

But p thinks, 'He thinks he can take me in with that old trick', i.e.

$$p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow p)))$$

Example 5

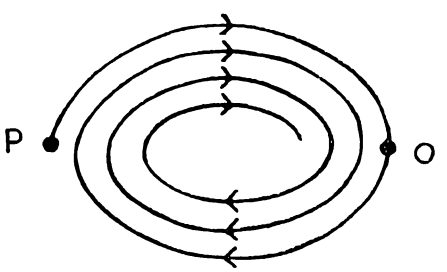
$$\frac{o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow o)))}{p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow (o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow o))))}$$

A 'paranoid' man (p)

His wife (o)

He is convinced that she is deceiving him in order to make him jealous: but he is not letting on that he knows this. So he pretends to be jealous (although he is not) in order to find out if it is true. But he is not sure that she may not be on to this.

i.e. He thinks she thinks that she has managed to trick him into being jealous, but she (i) may not be deceiving him, she might only be pretending to be deceiving him, so (ii) he will only pretend to be jealous but (iii) she might be aware that he is aware that she is not sure whether he really is jealous. The estrangement from direct feedback can be seen perhaps better if the following 'onion' diagram is used.



In this 'paranoid' position there appears to be a failure in negative feedback, and a sort of 'run away' into an almost infinite regress (obsessive-ruminative thinking, etc.).

We shall conclude these considerations by inviting the reader to ponder the skill of both parties in using attributions in this verbal fencing match between a husband and wife.

SHE: I love you, darling, you know I do.

$p \rightarrow o$ $\qquad\qquad$ $o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow o)$

HE: . . . and I love you too, dear.

$$o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow o) \equiv p \rightarrow o \equiv o \rightarrow (p \rightarrow o)$$

SHE: I love you, but you think I'm silly.

$p \to o \qquad \not\equiv p \to (o \to p)$

HE: That's projection.

$p \to (o \to p) \not\equiv o \to p$ but: $p \to (o \to p) \equiv p \to o$

or $p \to p \equiv p \to (o \to p)$

SHE: That's nonsense. You *do* think I'm silly.

$o \to (o \to p) \not\equiv o \to p \qquad p \to (o \to p) \equiv o \to p$

HE: I never said anything of the kind.
etc.

SHE: You just said I was.

HE: I said you were projecting.

SHE: That's what I'm saying; you don't respect me.

HE: That's not true, my dear, you *know* I respect you.

SHE: Don't tell *me* that I know you respect me. I know that you don't. You always think you know my own mind better than I know it myself.

HE: But you don't know your own mind. That's why you're seeing a doctor, and that's why you're ill. I am trying to help you; can't you see that?

SHE: You're not helping me a bit. You're trying to destroy me. You never could tolerate me thinking for myself.

HE: That's just what I want you to do. I'm not one of those husbands who think women should not be intelligent. I think you're a most intelligent woman.

SHE: Then why don't you treat me like one. I suppose you think that's what you were doing when you swore at me last night, and called me a filthy bitch.

HE: I'm sorry; you made me lose my temper. You can behave abominably at times; that's just what you wanted me to call you. I forgot you were really ill.

SHE: I meant every word I said.

Finally the argument has the following structure:

p (the wife) says:

$$p \to (o \to p) > o \to (o \to p)$$
$$p \to (p \to p) > o \to (p \to p)$$
$$p \to (p \to o) > o \to (p \to o)$$

o (the husband) says:

$$o \to (p \to p) > p \to (p \to p)$$
$$o \to (o \to p) > p \to (o \to p)$$
$$o \to (p \to o) > p \to (p \to o)$$

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