

“Normal” schizophrenia: the nature of the dual personality of the human condition.

We normally regard schizophrenia as a state which is quite different from the one we are all in, generally we consider that the lives of people with so-called mental illness and their thought processes are very much different to what we all experience from day to day. However this really is not the case. A mental illness is really something that can be classified as being outside of what is considered “normal” operating conditions within society, the inference being that society is utterly sane. Through films such as Jack Nicholson’s “One flew over the cuckoo’s nest” and James Stewart’s “Harvey” we can understand that very commonly it is society which has the insanity and very often the person with mental illness is expressing this with more gusto and forthrightness, because for one reason or another they are simply unable to contain their “madness”. In some cases they are actually seen as being insane when in fact they are expressing a profound sanity, it’s just that within society this is so “without borders” it is regarded a threat which needs to be locked away.

If children were examined mentally, not from the standpoint of being children but just on the expression they deliver, they would likely be considered a danger to society, especially those who have Down’s Syndrome and other things that really don’t “fit in” to what is considered “normal”, because a child’s view is not about the adult-human’s engagement with and total focusing upon the head but rather a connection to the body and to feeling. From those criteria they would be considered an unparalleled danger to society and its structures. If adults behaved as infant children, society would be deemed to be utterly mad in terms of what we consider today. However this is only because society itself cannot see outside of its box, which is why utopian existence cannot occur within the present structuralism.

In everyone there is a normal level of mental illness that is considered to be “okay” or within limits, just as we all have cancer and all the other various diseases that are so fear-inducing in society but merely at levels that are not regarded as “problematic”. However the schizophrenic pattern is one that is so normal in everyday life that it is very difficult to differentiate the diagnosis of a person *not* being schizophrenic to some extent, but when a person uses phrases like “I asked myself about this” or “I thought to myself”, “I knew myself”, “I understood myself”, “I found myself”, that is never questioned. However these are a tell-tail sign of talking to a “self” whether internally or externally, and a process of having a conversation with an entity which to all onlookers looks crazy; similarly if we see someone walking alone down a street seemingly deep in conversation with themselves we might consider them to be mad until we notice they’re using blue-tooth, which we then think is acceptable!

The point is that we are constantly engaged with a voice in the head or an idea fundamentally of me and myself, brilliantly illustrated by Jim Carrey’s “Me, Myself and Irene”, which again shows the commonality of split personality. There is a connection of course with the schizoid state which comes from the Latin meaning "a splitting of the mind," with the now more commonly described as an “utterly different” state, called

split-personality disorder, which in fact is not dissimilar but is classified differently. In this case a person may exhibit two to hundreds of different personalities, that is a total fragmentation of the personality into seemingly separate bits. This of course is similar to the fact that we may assume disparate personalities at home from when we are at work, or with different people, to prove different things or pretend to fit into different environments. This is not seen as a problem, but as a completely normal strategy for “coping with life”, whereas the person with split personality is considered to be “sick”.

Interestingly, in split personality and in schizophrenia, the therapist’s idea is always to draw a person to a sense of singularity, they will attempt to draw into one character the highs and lows that can come from being in different states, to have one role instead of many, which the therapist would perhaps call the “true” “self”. However even people who go through a process of gradually drawing themselves together will always find at the base of this that all these states are coming from an original root that no therapist can help with. Interestingly this original root is the same for everyone and therefore in the end everyone has a touch of schizophrenia, for some it’s more dramatic than others, that’s all. The therapist themselves will be split into at least two roles, one as a therapist the other as something else. “Normal” dual personality is better than obvious dual personality, which is a diagnosis of schizophrenia. In fact it makes no difference how many separate individuals one is, more important perhaps is that they are expressed, that they have a vocalization, because fundamentally there are the same problems with having 20 different “personalities “ as there are to having two.

As always, the root is the nature of the feeling of separation, feeling that the world is happening out there and I’m in here. This is what we could call the primary split or primary-schizophrenia. In many ways the ancient peoples understood this split and would often refer to two worlds, one being the world of the spirit and the other the world of the human. Interestingly Descartes also had this ideology and basic schizophrenia, which he could not see out of: “I think therefore I am”. However in the ancient world there were those who could see the two worlds together and be in both, often they were people who would in the modern day be called schizophrenic. Shamans would use hallucinogenic drugs to allow a person to look behind the mask of the so-called “normal” state so that one can realize the nature of duality within the mind. In a way the hallucinogens would exaggerate those aspects that are seen as madness and make them more “real” or making them more “schizophrenic”. The Shaman then takes the person through this “spirit world”, a guide to the nature of the madness, ending at a point of clarity. The clarity of course is actually potentially a total collapse of the original belief that there is a difference between the inner-me and outer-you and so “self” completely evaporates. In these cultures the Shaman was in a way very in touch with the nature of duality and could not get away from it, he or she lived it, and so in many ways they had a far greater understanding of dis-ease than a person who had a hidden sense or voice in the head that spoke in “normal” terms and could live out a “normal” life.

The problem is that schizophrenia and many other mental illnesses are very often judged on the basis of what society is now. If we are looking from this position and trying to maintain the status quo, this a madness that makes the schizophrenic seem like a deeply

balanced expression in comparison to a society that is so dulled from his/her senses that they are zombies to be used by industry saying that that is “normal”. The film “The Matrix” eloquently expresses that the two worlds are of course undivided and the schizophrenic is a passageway between these two expressions, maddened by duality and an expression of this without pretence. The changes we see in the world today will exaggerate schizophrenia within society to the point of annihilation of its structure. The situation of the seeming chaos of schizophrenia is the actuality we are standing on, but it is unknown to most of us. In the end this will come to the fore and we all will need to engage with the reality of our inner-voices before the speaker is realized to be itself an echo of an original question: “what is “I”?”, an answerable question, leaving the possibility of the silence in which the question is asked as its only answer.

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