

The Deconstructive Owl of Minerva

The Deconstructive Owl of Minerva:
An Examination of Schizophrenia
through Philosophy, Psychoanalysis
and Postmodernism

By

Dr. Lillian Burke

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

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For my sister, Carol

with love

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INTRODUCTION

This book contributes to the wealth of knowledge available on the phenomenon of the schizophrenic experience. Beginning with an examination of the traditional use of the term schizophrenia, it opens by exploring the scientific and psychoanalytic use of the word. Within this framework it becomes evident that a wider interpretation than that of biology and genetics is required to explain the schizoid way of being. Starting with the current work of Timothy J. Crow and the effects of language on the developing brain, this work further questions categories of being and the self through the philosophy of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. By regarding the dialectic of spirit, the desire for recognition and the linguistic propensity to create the 'other,' the naturalisation of the insane comes into question. Through a philosophical reading of schizophrenia it becomes clearer that the linguistic experience is common and that relations to the 'other' are in varying degrees of intensity rather than difference. Further to this the effects of language on the self are investigated through the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan.

Through reading the notion of schizophrenia from the gothic to the psychotic, the deconstruction of the binary of sanity and insanity offers a contemporary understanding of the schizoid experience as well as underlining the consequences of creating entities of being. In the course of a Lacanian reading of schizophrenia many issues are raised; from the ego and trauma to post-history and perception. These issues are taken up in postmodern theory in order to understand changes in perception and interpretation and the repercussions these changes have in the treatment of the diagnosed schizophrenic and our comprehension of the schizoid experience in light of philosophy, literary theory and psychoanalysis. The intensity of this way of being-in-the-world is predominantly a struggle with the phenomenon of language and its complexity raises more questions concerning the anxiety for the archive, the neurosis of becoming and the object/subject dialectic than questions about the origin of the disease or the measurement of the condition of schizophrenia. This book concludes with an interdisciplinary reading of schizophrenia; the notion itself, its complexity and its tremendous chorus whose voices rise up to know the truth.

In this book, I aim to highlight the significance of the ‘other’ across the disciplines of philosophy, psychoanalysis and postmodern literary theory. The ‘other’ in this work refers to the notion of the ‘other’ in the linguistic field.¹ By combining these three disciplines I will support the significance of the ‘other’ and highlight its objectifying characteristics. In doing so I will demonstrate the negative influence the objectifying ‘other’ has on the subject. Following from this, I will illustrate the causes and consequences of delegating the diagnosed schizophrenic as the ‘other’ of society. It is my conviction that the characteristic schizophrenic symptoms of auditory hallucinations and ontological fear of objectivity highlight the observable fact that everyone’s identity is fragmented by language; yet, it is the phenomenon of the schizophrenic experience, which defies the conventions of rationality; that generates its ‘otherness’ in society.

The notion of schizophrenia, as a psychiatric illness, will be deconstructed to demonstrate that schizophrenia, as a way of being, is a heightened awareness of the mastery of language and highlights the on-going trauma of consciousness upon entering the symbolic order, whereby the notion and reality of the ‘other’ is created. It is upon the awareness of the mastery of language that the binary opposites of sanity and insanity manifest themselves to be deconstructed. Through an examination of postmodern culture and its dialectic relationship with modernism, both the significance and instability of objectivity and rationality, as naturalisation processes, will be examined to further the interpretation of schizophrenia as a reasonable and primarily linguistic condition, as well as formulating a hypothesis for how treatment of the condition can best be approached. By the assessment of the inherent dialectic in cultural movements the notion of schizophrenia becomes aligned with redefinitions of the self, both from individual and cultural perspectives. Thereby, the inevitability of the schizophrenic experience in society, as a reaction to the traumatic use of language, and as an indispensable expression in the object/subject dialectic of literary theory, foregrounds the necessity of interdisciplinary approaches to foster our understanding of the development of the term “schizophrenia,” its classification as ‘other’ in society and the linguistic effect of dividing the self. The central theme of this book, throughout the various chapters, is the consequences of language on the self.

Due to the confines of my focus, I will be selecting one main philosopher and one main psychoanalyst to prove my theory that

¹ Jacques Lacan refers to this ‘other’ as Other in the context of the symbolic order. However, as my thesis will discuss several kinds of ‘other’ in different philosophical contexts with definitions that resonate with each other, I will refer to the ‘other’ of language using inverted commas as opposed to a capital O.

schizophrenia is a linguistic condition. In my research, I have found studies that have been conducted on the correlations between psychosis and culture, on G.W.F. Hegel and Jacques Lacan as well as on schizophrenia and literature. However, the application of Hegel's phenomenology and Lacan's psychoanalysis to the concept of schizophrenia, both as a psychiatric condition and as manifest in culture, has never been undertaken. Therefore, it is my aim to demonstrate that, through this interdisciplinary approach, a more thorough understanding of the causes and effects of schizophrenia can be obtained as well as establishing the argument that schizophrenia is a linguistic condition; the ultimate expression of the fragmentary effect of language and the hidden desires of authentic subjectivity. I aim to highlight that language, as a social construct, is a major determining factor in schizophrenia and, at the same time, it is through language that schizoid-effective tendencies can be harnessed. Hegel's philosophy, Lacanian psychoanalysis and postmodernism, as examined in relation to schizophrenia, will be explored under the recurring themes of 1) fragmentation, 2) language, 3) stream of consciousness, and 4) deconstruction. The first two have been found to be common themes in my interdisciplinary research on schizophrenia, therefore, they warranted investigation. The concept of stream of consciousness requires analysis in order to highlight the anxieties felt by the schizophrenic and to explore avenues for the understanding of hallucinations, from the powerful impressions of objectivity to an acknowledgement of desire. This analysis sets the stage for the deconstruction of my findings, at the end of each chapter.

My reasoning for selecting Hegel's phenomenology in this thesis lies in his philosophy of the dialectic, particularly as manifested in his "Lordship and Bondage" theory. Hegel's themes of recognition, ownership, redefinitions of the self towards Absolute Knowledge and the propensity for deconstruction within the dialectic are recurring themes within the book. Hegel's influence has spread to Lacanian psychoanalysis and cultural theory; notably Marxism and schizoanalysis. Most importantly, Hegel's phenomenology illustrates the rationale of auditory hallucinations and streams of consciousness. Through the analysis of being-in-itself and being-for-itself for consciousness, and the dialectic which ensues, the desire for self-identity, within the symbolic order, is better understood. The phenomenon of schizoid-effective tendencies together with the dialectic of becoming highlights the rationale of schizophrenia. Hegel's philosophy of Absolute Spirit or Absolute Knowledge is also vital in the understanding of schizoid effective tendencies as the subject's experience and history are compounded over time and taken in their totality. The

criticisms of an objective 'other' towards a subject play their part in aiding the subject's realisation of his/her Absolute Spirit. In recognising this, the objective 'other' becomes the slave whilst the subject once again becomes the master.

My principle motive for reading Lacan in relation to schizophrenia resides in his tripartite structure of the mind; the real self, the symbolic self and the imaginary self. The desire of the real self to gain expression in the symbolic order is akin to the anxieties of the schizophrenic in trying to maintain his/her hold on his/her sense of subjectivity irrespective of the mastery of objectivity. Lacan's influence, through his examination of language, on literary theory, offers tremendous assistance in substantiating my contention that schizophrenia is a linguistic condition and that the hyper-reflexivity that results from this way of being is a logical reaction to the juxtaposition of multiple selves as narrated by language and the phenomenon of the 'other.' Lacan's theses on language are the most closely aligned to my interpretation of schizophrenia. According to Lacan, the self is complete before the mirror phase i.e. before he/she realises that he/she is a self-conscious being. The fragmentation of the self begins when the self realises its separateness from others, particularly the primary caregiver. Upon realising that the self is a social being, he/she begins the process of self-deconstruction. In attempting to make sense of his/her world, self-consciously the self grapples with language. As a social construct, language is a means of allowing the subject to function as part of a community or to be-in-the-world, whilst accommodating the other social constructs of the self's existence e.g. society, history and experience as are narrated by language. The repercussions of harnessing the desire of the real self in the symbolic order will be further examined through the work of Julia Kristeva and her thesis on abjection, in conjunction with Lacan. There are several theories by Lacan that I will be focusing on in this thesis. For example, the mirror phase and recognition in the formation of the self-conscious mind, the name-of-the-father, the language of the self, desire, the real self, the symbolic self and the imaginary self, the pleasure principle and the death drive.

The central postmodern theorists I will be focusing on are Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and their concepts of schizoanalysis and rhizomatic knowledge, together with their theses on capitalism and anti-Oedipus. The alleged fragmentation of the schizophrenic condition will be investigated through the notion of desire, whereby the assumed unity of the postmodern age, under the guise of a schizophrenic age, will be brought into question. The dialectic of modernism and postmodernism will further explain the features of postmodernism such as nostalgia, space,

post-history, the desire for the archive and the consequences of these for understanding schizophrenia. Following this, Jacques Derrida's theses on time, metaphysics and archive fever will deconstruct postmodernism and schizophrenia. The desire for recognition, in order to define an age, warrants a distinction between modernism and postmodernism. However, the theoretical approaches to these cultural phenomena unveil postmodernism to be self-deconstructive to the point where schizophrenia can be seen as modernist, in comparison to the interpretation of postmodernism as an age of completion. The contrast between the theories of Fredric Jameson and Jean-François Lyotard highlights the various interpretations of distinctions made between modernism and postmodernism. Lyotard's intellectualisation of postmodernism has opened the cannon on the dialectic of both cultural movements. The use of other theorists will work in support of the ideas of these central theorists, for example, Karl Marx and Michel Foucault.

The concept of the 'other' will be of paramount importance in the analysis of Hegel, Lacan and the postmodern critics, as outlined under the themes of fragmentation, language, stream of consciousness and deconstruction. The concept of the 'other' is necessary to explain the self-conscious mind as a social construct. It is also crucial in explaining the tendencies of a schizophrenic mind, and its mirror in how society has become fragmented due to its drives to satisfy the 'other.'

The theme of recognition is of central importance in the philosophical, psychoanalytic, postmodern and literary aspects of my work and for the understanding of schizoid effective tendencies. This theme is a major part of Hegelian philosophy and Lacanian psychoanalysis. In both instances the self needs to recognise itself as a self in order to acquire Absolute Knowledge and a healthy mind. If the self recognises itself as an object as opposed to a subject, its self-conscious mind will fragment. Also, when the self recognises itself as a social construct the real self does not gain expression if this recognition is simply accepted, hence the disillusionment which is characteristic of postmodernism. In terms of stream of consciousness, greater comprehension of schizoid effective disorders is possible when the language of the objective 'other' is recognised as a social construct, albeit a social construct unattached to a real self. The internal dialogue of a schizoid mind is constructed by language. The mastery of the 'other' is a social construct that is internalised, therefore an idea that can be overturned by the individual. The master's assumption of power is misleading and the objectified subject needs to recognise this in order to alleviate the effects of a schizoid disorder.

The dialectic of consciousness will form part of a recurrent analysis in this book also. The creation of objects of consciousness and self-

consciousness's relation to them is of primary importance in understanding the mastery of objectivity and its consequences for a developing mind. The dialectic of consciousness will coincide with my analysis of language and its relationship to theories of self. The temporality of interpretation will also be investigated under the themes of stream of consciousness and deconstruction in order to highlight the phenomenon of auditory hallucinations and the possibilities of reducing their terror for the schizophrenic.

Metaphysical time will be further studied in conjunction with theories of metalanguage. This leads to an examination of the use of language in literature, autobiography, speech and writing. Further to this assessment, the phenomena of self-distancing, self-isolation and existential anxiety will be analysed together with their relation to the *sinthome*.

Chapter 1: Scientific and Psychoanalytic Background to Schizophrenia

The psychiatric framework of schizophrenia is outlined in this chapter in order to contextualise the notion of schizophrenia together with the predominant use of the term. As will be explained, the study of schizophrenia as a linguistic struggle has gained momentum in psychiatric research which both substantiates interdisciplinary investigations and supports my contention that schizophrenia is the result of complex relations with language. The work of Prof. Tim Crow is central to this chapter as his investigations of language use on the brain are at the cutting edge of psychiatric research into schizophrenia.

Chapter 2: G.W.F. Hegel

This chapter will focus on Hegel's major works: *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Philosophy of Mind* with the emphasis on the development of the self-conscious mind. Particular emphasis will be paid to the influence of society, history and experience on its development in the battle between the master and the slave. The theories of Jacques Derrida will also be related to Hegel's philosophy.

Chapter 3: Jacques Lacan

This chapter will focus on two of Lacan's major works, *Écrits* and *The Language of the Self: The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis*, with the emphasis on the development of the self-conscious mind. Particular emphasis will again be paid to the influence of society, history and

experience on its development in the desire of the real self to express itself by its actions and the interpretations of such through the structure of language.

Chapter 4: Postmodernism

In conjunction with Hegel and Lacan the following theorists will be brought to bear: Jameson, Deleuze, Guattari and Lyotard. Their theories on fragmentation, stream of consciousness, deconstruction of the self and language will be vital in highlighting the research already carried out on these themes. Also, by applying their theories I will be able to highlight my own theory on the significance of the philosophical approach to schizophrenia developed through literary theory, postmodern theory, philosophical theory, psychological theory and linguistic theory.

Chapter 5: An Interdisciplinary Examination

This chapter is based on a philosophical understanding of schizophrenia and will focus on the theory of language as a social construct and the development of the self-conscious mind through society's structures. The central theme of recognition for the contemplation of schizophrenia will be highlighted by reference to the previous chapters together with their theories and their application. The narrative parameters of schizophrenia will highlight the narrative parameters of postmodernism. It is through this emphasis that a philosophical understanding will take place. This approach to schizophrenia concentrates on the internal dialogue with the 'other.' As dialogue and reality are constructed around language so too are auditory hallucinations and the objective 'other.' It is through recognising language as a social construct and the ontological fragmentation which results from a break with the self that an understanding of the schizoid split can be achieved. Linguistics and Hegelian philosophy will highlight the psychological implications as outlined by Lacan's work. The extended psychological implications will be emphasised by reference to the postmodern theorists.

Conclusion

Through the application of Hegelian philosophy and Lacanian psychoanalysis to postmodern theory, along with the study of language, the notions of recognition and the 'other' will be highlighted. The work of the postmodern theorists will demonstrate the projected fragmentation of

the mind in a wider social context as well as highlighting the necessity of language for the purposes of interpretation. Social structures impose themselves on the conscious and self-conscious mind of the individual. As a result of this, the real self enters into dialectics in order to gain expression. This is further complicated when the self-conscious mind engages in a battle with itself for expression. It is a tension of language within language. Due to the fact that the self is created in and by language, schizophrenia can be best understood through the recognition that language is a social construct. Conversely, the analysis of schizophrenia allows for further interpretations of language and the self. Furthermore, through recognising the deferral of the metaphor, the instability of objectivity, the abstract notion of rationality and the consequences of a desiring self within language, the notion of psychosis will be found unstable and limiting. Consequently, the concept of schizophrenia can be seen to reveal more about the object/subject dialectic of culture than about the creation of society's 'other'; the schizophrenic. The latter acutely experiences the division of the self through the projection of the objectified self in the form of hallucinations. It is because of experienced trauma for the self-conscious mind, already formed in the symbolic order, that the individual in question remembers the initial trauma of entering the symbolic order and developing a split in consciousness. This incident becomes naturalised through the creation of the imaginary and the symbolic self and by the law of rationality. However, it is through remembrance, as provoked by a traumatic event, that the hyper-reflexivity, anti-epiphany, terror, anxiety, hallucinations, nihilism, sensitivity to observance and frustrations with language, that are collectively schizophrenic symptoms, are experienced by the individual. This reaction to the memory of the birth of self-consciousness is central to cultural inquiry. The irony of a schizophrenic 'other' is that the trauma of becoming self-conscious is experienced by each individual, whether it is remembered consciously or not. The desiring self fuels the dialectic of becoming, nonetheless, throughout history, deconstructing the notion of the 'other,' its construct and its temporal consequences. The classified schizophrenic equally shares this dialectic of becoming and as he/she becomes part of the collective consciousness of culture and within the humanities the notion of schizophrenia enriches our understanding of the desiring self, both individually and collectively.

There are limitations to my book due to time constraints and space. As a result, I have researched the symptoms of schizophrenia and their relationship to language as opposed to examining the causes of the condition. Also, due to obvious constraints, I am unable to discuss

literature and art as examples of my theories as much as I would have liked. However, these are areas I wish to explore in future research. As I am working in the humanities and not as a clinician I can propose philosophical approaches to the treatment of schizophrenic symptoms, but not a treatment regime.

CHAPTER ONE

SCIENTIFIC AND PSYCHOANALYTIC BACKGROUND TO SCHIZOPHRENIA

Introduction

The notions of schizophrenia as a scientific entity, a psychiatric classification and a philosophical state of being need to be comprehensively re-examined in light of the phenomena of postmodernity, the changing parameters of culture and philosophical/theoretical studies of the self. To claim that the current age is schizophrenic, as is so often stated about postmodernism, is naïve. It also damages the social perception of diagnosed schizophrenics, sometimes exacerbating stigma and social isolation by creating awareness of the condition in terms of cultural studies, without adequate information about the experience of the schizophrenic. A re-examination of this notion calls into question philosophical concepts, such as existentialism, ontology, metaphysics, phenomenology, subjectivity and objectivity, in the endeavour to assist studies in linguistics and psychoanalysis, which have proven fruitful in the understanding of schizophrenia. This action, in itself, addresses the immediate and present anxiety of the postmodern condition. In addressing the postmodern self, it is no longer feasible to study, in isolation, the various schools of thought that question the individual's relation to his/her environment; rather, it is necessary to collaborate our findings to further our understanding of reality, particularly as it is manifested through the experience of the schizoid self. Through an interdisciplinary approach, towards a greater understanding of the truth of schizophrenia, it becomes clear that the use of isolated disciplinary entities, while it has a practical value, often serves only to distinguish and qualify findings and sometimes distracts from the goal of understanding the object of analysis. In the case of schizophrenia, disciplinary boundaries have functioned as frames which detract the eye from the painting itself.

In this book, the sensitivity of an individual to language will be highlighted as a potentiality for a schizoid personality and in turn a greater

understanding of the self (schizoid and 'normal': the two are not diametrically opposed) will be fostered. It will indicate the propensity to dissolve units of selfhood, through a reduction of fear; to contemplate the holistic self together with a more enriched understanding of the complexities of human beings and their relationship to the outside world. The fear of exploring the self is illustrated through a historical inclination to objectify and categorize people into groups. This distances any characteristic that falls outside the categories of the norm and brackets them as 'abnormal' rather than exploring similarities of selfhood as opposed to deliberately distancing the 'abnormal.' Ironically, the characteristics of 'normal' behaviour are never clearly stated in any of the literature that pertains to schizophrenia. Working on assumptions and objectifying sections of people is dangerous and foolhardy e.g. people in positions of trust may take advantage of their position whilst more vulnerable categories of people can feel overwhelmed by a diagnosis or labelling to the point of suicide. The fear of the self and its potentially is further manifest through the classifications of persons into entities of wellness/illness or sanity/insanity.

The damage that has been done through the classification of schizophrenia by various schools of thought is immense. In spite of the continued disagreement as to what schizophrenia is, from a mental illness to a claim for creative genius, the dilemmas surrounding its definition have not been resolved. Nevertheless, the inhumane treatment of patients over the centuries, from water treatments and spinning chairs through to the current practice of psychosurgery (lobotomy), is a result of medical and psychiatric practitioners and their historical disagreements and reclassifications, rather than of an open-minded progression in the understanding of the diagnosed schizophrenic. In this work, the terms schizophrenia and schizophrenic will be used, as they are in the field of medicine and psychiatry, for the purposes of clarity. Their use, in this context, does not imply an acceptance of the terms and their medical and psychiatric definitions, but serves as a means to examine the entity of schizophrenia itself, as it is almost impossible to understand the notion of schizophrenia outside of the current literature and terminology. Furthermore, if I am to contribute towards a deeper understanding of schizophrenia it is necessary to begin from the extant writing on the topic, so that inconsistencies and problems can be highlighted and that which is substantive and useful can be harnessed. Understandably, almost all of the literature available on schizophrenia has a medical context, and studies of postmodernity that align themselves with schizophrenia, have hypotheses based in medical language. The confines of language, both as a form of communication and

as a medium for recognition, will be addressed throughout the book including the terminology itself. Schizophrenia is more usually described and defined through science, rather than philosophy, theory or cultural studies. The function of this prologue is to describe some of these scientific modes of understanding, with the aim of showing their attributes and faults, and making a case for the study of schizophrenia through philosophical and theoretical discourse *as well as* scientific.

Schizophrenia and Science

Timothy J. Crow has written extensively on the origins of psychosis through studying the evolution of the brain. His work is central to this section of the book as his focus is predominantly the correlation between schizophrenia and language, which creates an obvious link between the study of the condition in science and the humanities. In evolutionary terms, the asymmetry of the human brain into the right and left hemispheres and into a four-chambered organ is relatively recent, beginning approximately five million years ago.¹ According to Stephen Jay Gould, the human brain has not changed in 100,000 years. He states, “Large, widespread and successful species tend to be especially stable. Humans fall into this category...Human bodily form has not altered appreciably in 100,000 years.”² The mutation which caused brain development to alter to form different chambers resulted from the development of language. *Homo sapiens* required language to cater for the increasing complexities of his/her social environment. As the brain evolved to meet this new demand, studies have shown that the increased weight of the brain grew out of proportion with body weight. This point in evolution marked the response of the brain’s evolution to cope with the increasing complexities of language. Crow states:

At certain points in evolution, as for example between the baboon and the great apes, there is an increase in brain weight that cannot be accounted for in terms of a simple increase in body size. [Harry J.] Jerison refers to this as ‘added neural capacity’ with the implication that the brain has acquired new and more complex functions.³

¹ Timothy J. Crow, “The Origins of Psychosis and ‘The Descent of Man,’” *British Journal of Psychiatry* 159, no. 14 (1991): 81.

² Stephen Jay Gould, *The Richness of Life: The Essential Stephen Jay Gould* (London: Vintage Books, 2007), 381.

³ Crow, “The Origins of Psychosis and ‘The Descent of Man,’” 78.

It is believed the ‘added neural capacity’ was required to accommodate ‘Machiavellian Intelligence’⁴ and ‘the social brain.’⁵ Machiavellian Intelligence developed as a response to the social environment as opposed to the physical environment as the former was not as easily predicted. As a result, the human brain had to become more sophisticated in order to compete and survive.⁶ The social brain was required to adapt to increasing interactions within primitive society. The ability to recognise other *Homo sapiens*, to communicate with and identify them together with registering facial features and intentions, conspired to escalate changes in brain development and evolution. The increasing capacity of the brain to register and recognise speech along with performing its analysis has not been without its difficulties. The distribution of various tasks to the separate parts of the brain i.e. the location of speech and temporal analysis to the left hemisphere and spatial analysis to the right hemisphere⁷ has not been clear cut. The communication between the left and right hemispheres, being of a lateral nature, has further added to the susceptibility of the brain to miscommunicate information. The evolutionary principle on the duality of the brain requires both hemispheres to work independently in the processing of various data but at the same time they communicate laterally, thus making them co-dependent. According to Crow, “the resulting increase in information processing capacity also has rendered the brain susceptible to new dysfunctions. We may assume that one such class of dysfunction is the risk of psychosis.”⁸

It follows that the development of language as a means of communication to cater for an increasingly complex social world in itself gave rise to the advance of psychosis through a rapidly evolving brain. Crow has investigated the premise that schizophrenia is the price *Homo sapiens* pay for language.⁹ This is demonstrated by the fact that schizophrenia continues to exist in society despite the fact that it creates an

⁴ Richard Byrne and Andrew Whiten, *Machiavellian Intelligence. Social Expertise and the Evolution of Intellect in Monkeys, Apes and Humans* (Oxford: Oxford Science Publications, 1988).

⁵ Leslie Brothers, “The Social Brain: A Project for Integrating Primate Behavior and Neurophysiology in a New Domain,” *Concepts in Neuroscience* 15 (1990): 27-51.

⁶ Crow, “The Origins of Psychosis and ‘The Descent of Man,’” 79.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Timothy J. Crow, “Schizophrenia as the Price that *Homo sapiens* Pays for Language: A Resolution of the Central Paradox in the Origin of the Species,” *Brain Research Reviews* 31 (2000): 118-129.

apparent evolutionary weakness for social beings. The fact that it has not been mutated out of existence, together with its prevalence across cultures and the similarity of symptoms between them, suggests that it is not an exclusively genetic or environmental disease. Crow states:

It cannot be that there is a fraction of the population that carries a gene that is absent from the remainder because if such a fraction existed, there is no reason why it should remain constant in populations that have been separate for tens of thousands of years. Variation between populations, either as a result of differential selection or genetic drift would be expected...if the disease is genetic in origin, why are these genes not selected out of the population?¹⁰

No other disease acts so independently of its environment, in terms of its onset and alleviation. Schizophrenia differs from regular genetic illnesses such as diabetes or heart defects. Other psychological diseases, such as autism or asperger's syndrome have not been definitively proven as genetic in nature either. The environmental factors of a healthy diet and immunisation from childhood infections are not enough to safeguard an individual from developing a schizoid effective disorder. Studies have shown that there is a possibility that the genetic component of schizophrenia carries the potential for the disease but the development of schizophrenia relies on many complex evolutionary and psychological factors. Studies from Franz Kallman, Eliot Slater and Erik Stromgren have shown that schizophrenia is inherited. However, the exact gene that carries schizophrenia has yet to be identified in spite of the fact that schizophrenia occurs in one percent of the human race.¹¹ Acute stress and prolonged exposure to a stressful environment have been noted in a large number of stories told by diagnosed schizophrenics. Nevertheless, genetics, the environment, psychiatry or biology cannot yet offer a satisfactory explanation as to the exact cause of schizophrenia. Its cause has never become fact. Crow believes that, "schizophrenia, it seems, is a characteristic of human populations. It is a disease (perhaps the disease) of humanity."¹²

The trauma of language is a universal condition which is exclusive to *Homo sapiens*. It separates *Homo sapiens* from other primates and the

¹⁰ Timothy J. Crow, "Is Schizophrenia the Price that *Homo sapiens* Pays for Language?" *Schizophrenia Research* 28 (1997): 130-131.

¹¹ Abram Hoffer, *Healing Schizophrenia: Complementary Vitamin and Drug Treatments* (Ontario: CCM Press Inc., 2004), 82.

¹² T.J. Crow, "Is Schizophrenia the Price *Homo sapiens* Pays for Language?" 130.

evolution of the human brain maintains this distinction. Crow states that, “as communication, language has characteristics that distinguish it from precursor primate systems.”¹³ The key to the evolutionary distinction lies in syntax. Crow points out the case of the vervet monkey, which has a system of fixed signs that allows it to communicate the signs for other primates, for example, “eagle, leopard or snake.”¹⁴ However, with *Homo sapiens*, the variety of sentences and the meaning of signifiers is infinite, which requires the human brain to forever strive to identify with the speaker or the listener, depending on its position. The potential for confusion and misinterpretation is equally infinite and it rapidly accelerates the prospect of psychosis. Language is the foundation for psychosis and equally language is the defining characteristic of human beings. Freidrich Max Mueller argued in 1873:

There is between the whole animal kingdom on the one side, and man, even in his lowest state, on the other, a barrier which no animal has ever crossed, and that barrier is – *Language*...I should still hold that nothing deserves the name of man except what is able to speak...a speaking elephant or an elephantine speaker could never be called an elephant.¹⁵

Ludwig Wittgenstein held the same premise in *Philosophical Investigations* stating that, “if a lion could speak we would not understand his language.”¹⁶

The independence of functions between the left and right hemispheres of the brain does not always occur and this malfunction is one suggestion for how psychosis develops. A failure of the lateralization of language functions between the two hemispheres highlights the difficulties the evolving brain has in coping with social and communicative pressures. According to Crow, studies have shown through the autopsy of schizophrenic patients that the volume of the superior temporal gyrus is significantly reduced in the left hemisphere and this is “inversely correlated with auditory hallucinations.”¹⁷ However, this reduction in the left hemisphere has also been noted in the autopsy and brain scans of ‘normal’ people.

¹³ Ibid., 131.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Freidrich Max Mueller, “Lectures on Mr. Darwin’s Philosophy of Language,” in *The Origin of Language*, ed. Roy Harris, 147-233 (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996).

¹⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 190.

¹⁷ Crow, “Origins of Psychosis and ‘The Descent of Man,’” 77.

Richard P. Bentall states:

On closer inspection, however, the CT and structural MRI data are more ambiguous. In all studies, substantial variations in ventricular size have been observed in both [schizophrenic] patients and ordinary people. Moreover, some studies have failed to find evidence of significant ventricular enlargement, presumably because people who receive the diagnosis of schizophrenia form a heterogeneous group.¹⁸

No test has yet been developed to measure the ‘ordinary’ and acceptable volume of the human brain, much less the distinction between one hemisphere and the other, nor has there been a diagnostic test to establish the presence of schizophrenia. The similarity between schizophrenics and ‘normal’ people at a biological level echoes the similarities between them in terms of dealing with language which I will explore in later chapters. In the case of diabetes, a physician tests a patient’s blood for his/her insulin levels. There is no blood test for schizophrenia, no brain scan developed to detect it, or gene to locate it. Nevertheless, an individual will invariably become a diagnosed schizophrenic when he/she admits to ‘hearing voices.’ Auditory hallucinations, a phenomenon of language, are the single most frequently attributed symptom in the diagnosis of schizophrenia. No other ‘disease’ operates, or is diagnosed, in so loose a fashion. However, the study of auditory hallucinations can reveal a great deal about the brain’s task in coping with language.

The linguistic exchange rate between the two hemispheres of the human brain sheds interesting light on the phenomena of hallucinations and the ‘other’ for the self. The functions of the right hemisphere correlate with sensory input from the speaker and subsequently the right hemisphere decodes meaning to assist output from the left hemisphere. According to Crow, language functions are mediated by the right hemisphere rather than the left. He explains that, “these functions include discourse planning/ comprehension, understanding humour, sarcasm, metaphors and indirect requests, and the generation/comprehension of emotional prosody.”¹⁹ Studies of behaviour have shown that schizophrenics fare poorly in these areas, thus debilitating social interaction. The left hemisphere is associated with speech and rationality yet it is the right hemisphere that is believed to

¹⁸ Richard P. Bentall, *Madness Explained: Psychosis and Human Nature* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 158.

¹⁹ Rachel L. C. Mitchell and Timothy J. Crow, “Right Hemisphere Language Functions and Schizophrenia: The Forgotten Hemisphere?” in *Brain* 128 (2005): 963-978.

be the seat of insanity. Therefore, the evolution of the brain in splitting into two sections in order to comprehend the ‘other’ in the world causes confusion of psychotic proportions. According to Anne Harrington:

The general belief in the right hemisphere’s evolutionary inferiority, in its essentially animalistic qualities, almost certainly played a crucial role in the rise of still another perception of it – as a natural breeding-ground for madness...If madness is defined as loss of reason...and if to all extents and purposes only the *left* half of our brain is reasonable, then it becomes possible to envision the ‘brute brain within the man’s’ as lying on the *right* side of the skull.²⁰

Studies from Alexander Robertson (1875) and Valentin Mangan (1883) showed that auditory hallucinations were reported to be heard, more often than not, in the left ear whilst flattering compliments were heard in the right ear. Harrington states, “Mangan concluded that the left hemisphere (serving the right ear) was in a later stage of degeneration than the right hemisphere.”²¹ From the nineteenth century onwards the following table serves as a broad model for the polarities of the left and right hemispheres of the human brain.²²

Table 1-1

<i>Left Hemisphere</i>				
Humanness	Frontal lobe	Motor activity	Volition	Intelligence
Life of relations	Male	White superiority	Consciousness	Reason

Table 1-2

<i>Right Hemisphere</i>				
Animality	Occipital lobe	Sensory activity	Instinct	Passion/emotion
Organic life	Female	Nonwhite inferiority	Unconsciousness	Madness

²⁰ Anne Harrington, *Medicine, Mind, and the Double Brain* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 95-96.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

²² *Ibid.*, 100.

As it appears that for many years, in the practice of psychiatry, the brain appeared to be an organ divided, against itself.²³ The clear cut divisions between the functions of the two separate hemispheres clearly indicate the suppression of women and nonwhites in society for centuries. However, studies carried out by Crow and associates on handedness²⁴ showed that in schizophrenic patients the appearance of ambidextrous ability was more prevalent. This supported the theory that hemispheric indecision was likely to result in psychosis. Crow states, "Thus in terms of relative hand skill and its academic correlates individuals at risk of psychosis are pre-disposed to problems in inter-hemispheric integration."²⁵ More studies have shown that the perceived functions of the left and right hemispheres have been reduced or refined and in some cases have become reversed as noted in schizophrenic patients. These findings create great problems for the preconceived functions of the human brain. Nevertheless, the following positive symptoms²⁶ of schizophrenia will highlight that reversals of hemispheric functions are primarily caused by the use and interpretation of language.

*The Nuclear Symptoms of Schizophrenia*²⁷

- *Thought echo or commentary*: The subject experiences his own thought as repeated or echoed with very little interval between the original and the echo.
- *Voices commenting*: A voice or voices heard by the subject speaking about him and therefore referring to him in the third person.
- *Thought insertion*: The essence of the symptom is that the subject experiences thoughts *which are not his own* intruding into his mind. The symptom is not that he has been caused to have unusual thoughts (e.g., if he thinks the Devil is making him have evil thoughts) but that the thoughts *themselves* are not his. In the most typical case the alien thoughts are said to have been inserted into the mind from outside, by means of radar or telepathy or some other means.

²³ Ibid., 103.

²⁴ This refers to the preference for using one hand over the other.

²⁵ Crow, "Schizophrenia as the Price that *Homo sapiens* Pays for Language: A Resolution of the Central Paradox in the Origin of the Species," 123.

²⁶ The noted negative symptoms of schizophrenia include low motivation, social withdrawal, poverty of speech and thought and lack of concentration.

²⁷ J.K. Wing, J.E. Cooper and N. Sartorius, eds. *The Measurement and Classifications of Psychiatric Symptoms: An Instruction Manual for the P.S.E. and Catego Program*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974.