El grupo paranoide

Chapter 14

Cognitive Style

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CONTENTS

Possession of the truth

- The Great Truth
- The Only Truth
- The Determination of Truth

Inflexibility

- Deafness
- Intolerance

Absolutism and lack of nuance

Idiosyncratic thought and interests

Paralogia

- Interpretation of texts

Idiotization

Falsification of memory

Linguistic Style

Conviction and revelation

- Apparitions
- Inspirations
- Illumination

Possession of the truth

> Falret's persecuted-persecutors
> [...] Incapable, both through vanity and through native incorrectness of judgment, of recognizing that they can be wrong… (21).

The IP is someone who is never wrong, which, in other words, means that he holds the truth in his hands.

> Nazism
> ... I learned to see and to understand history in its true sense (31).

The great fortune of finding oneself in possession of the truth is not something that happens from the outset.

> Lasègue's persecution delusion
> [...] doubt is replaced by certainty (38).

This is a privilege enjoyed not only by delusional patients but also, and in exactly the same way, by the members of cult groups, who move from initial doubts…

> Sokagakkai
> Millions of members of the Nichiren Shoshu with five, ten or twenty years of practice, were filled with doubts and indecision at the beginning of their practice, but today… (59).

(…) to complete certainty.

> Sokagakkai
> Although he did not fully understand the subtle response, the district officer felt encouraged to ask more questions. When he had received answers to five of the twenty points he had prepared, he felt capable of resolving the remaining ones on his own. He experienced a strange inspiration and elation (32).

> Sokagakkai

> Now, the Soka Gakkai has developed a great self-awareness, and is capable of acting with absolute conviction (32).

Finally, the IP no longer thinks in *hypotheses* but in *convictions*.

> Delusions
> Jaspers (1959) saw delusion as a perverted view of reality, held in an incorrigible manner, and which had the following characteristics:
> (a) It was maintained with an unusual conviction (53).

The absolute conviction of the IPP that theirs is the *true truth* betrays itself in the way they express themselves…

> Sectarian groups. TFP
> That is to say, if 50 years ago one could have a rational certainty of moving toward that great disjunction between fidelity to Tradition or revolutionary chaos, such an option has now become a tangible evidence, an accomplished fact… (14).

> Messianic movements. Georges-Ernest Roux (20th century)
> The president of the Parisian section, Claude Pelletier, stated at a press conference that 'the flying saucers, which you mock, constitute irrefutable proof that our guide is eternal and that he is Jesus, who has returned to earth to atone for our sins' (10).

> Sectarian groups. TFP
> The author and associate of the Brazilian TFP, Dr. Atilio Guilherme Faoro, drawing on irrefutable documentation, demonstrates that Agrarian Reform condemns rural workers, its supposed beneficiaries, to a life similar to that of the *favelas* in large cities (12).

(…) although it can still be stated in a more explicit manner.

> Sokagakkai
> —Only the Nichiren Shoshu has transmitted the true heritage of Nichiren Daishonin. Therefore, the only True Buddhism is that of Nichiren Shoshu, from which it follows that the Gohonzon is absolutely correct and genuine (32).

The feeling of possessing the truth is not limited to the content of a delusion or an ideology but extends *to everything*. Imbued with his exacerbated superiority complex, the IPP feels qualified to pontificate on any subject. His opinions are always the correct ones.

> Sokagakkai
> Study while you are young, and later, faith in True Buddhism will make you invincible in all your endeavors. For example, this faith allows me to go directly to the essence of any subject so quickly and completely, that in a short time I can master it and surpass people who have specialized in it for years (32).

The Great Truth

It is very common among IPs, and almost universal in PCGs, to grant extreme importance to a set of beliefs identified as an ideology or doctrine, to which they cling with unusual force.

> Sokagakkai
> The theme of my work *The Human Revolution* is the Buddhist belief that a true revolution in an individual can modify the destiny of a country and ultimately of all humanity. That is my immutable creed (32).

> Nazism
> With its program of twenty-five theses, the National Socialist German Workers' Party has built its foundations, which must remain unshakeable. Now and always it is and will be the duty of the members of our movement not to criticize or modify these essential principles... (31).

> Sokagakkai
> Therefore, what we must do to attain Buddhahood is to establish an unwavering faith in the Gohonzon (35).

There is no doubt that —in order to establish the content of this *immutable creed*— many groups refer to a text or set of sacred texts that in turn form an ideology or a religion, and in which the PCG understands that absolute truth of universal validity resides.

Maoist Leninism

It is revisionism to deny the basic principles of Marxism, the universal truth of Marxism (40).

But it is no less true that, when a state of paranoidization sufficiently intense exists, the interpretations that the PL makes of that ideology together with the new elements added to it, from his own harvest, form a new ideology, a new *-ism*, which for the group's followers becomes, in fact, the Great Reference Truth in which to immerse oneself in the face of any doubt.

Leninism. Shining Path

Finally, his followers identified his supposed contributions to Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in an organic body which they called, first, the *guiding-thought* of comrade Gonzalo, and afterwards it rose to become the *Gonzalo thought*... later called Gonzaloism (26).

The Only Truth

And Gonzaloism, in addition to being entirely true, is *the sole* truth, given that the paranoid cognitive style tends to reject ambiguities and to think in terms of black or white, never grey.

Sokagakkai

He summarized the first part of his message in these vigorous words: 'Even though today there may be eight or ten cults that deceive and lead people astray, there can only be one valid True Buddhism in the Last Days of the Law. There is only one sun in the sky, and there must be one single eternal truth' (32).

Sokagakkai

He should carefully polish his address. After much deliberation, he decided to focus on the elements that distinguished Nichiren Shoshu from other religions and cults and that made it the only true religion in the world. He was interested in seeing the press's reaction to his words (32).

Cult groups. World Brotherhood

In it she said, among other things: 'Leslie, I have finally found the place that truly belongs to me in the world. God has called me to be part of the Brotherhood, who are the only true

> Christians on Earth. I have thrown away my jeans, because I have come to understand that they were part of my satanic past' (28).

And so, if one doctrine is true the others must necessarily be false, which leads to the deduction that *everyone else is mistaken* except the IGP itself. There exists some pejorative term with which to describe the wayward souls who live in error.

> Sokagakkai
> What had become of the most brilliant of the priests of the Minobu cult? In the clear mirror of Nichiren Shoshu, his true face had been reflected: that of heresy (32).

And let us not forget that from error nothing but negative consequences and misfortunes of every kind can arise.

> Sokagakkai
> This phrase means that only Nichiren Daishonin knew that heretical teachings make men unhappy and unfortunate (32).

The Determination of Truth

Both the IP and the members of the PCG display the same conviction of being in full possession of the truth and show no signs of doubt. But there exists between the two a notable difference, which is the following: the former constructs his own truth or chooses it for himself from among the ideas that his environment offers him, while in the PCG this task belongs solely to the leader. It is the latter who dictates what the absolute truth is, and his followers are entitled to do no more than believe it entirely and without reservation.

> Italian Fascism
> All of this was presided over by the personal cult of the Duce, which developed especially in the late nineteen-twenties, with slogans such as '*Il Duce ha sempre ragione*' ('the Duce is always right') (43).

> Nazism

> With pride we see that only one man is exempt from all criticism: the Führer. And this is because everyone feels and knows that he is always right and always will be." (Rudolf Hess, quoted in 60)

Nazism

> The ultimate objective of such training was to instill an unlimited loyalty to the Führer, embodied in the following words of Doctor Ley: 'When the Führer commands, we obey. At this moment no one must raise objections. No one must ask: Is the Führer right and is what he says correct?, for what the Führer says is always correct. If I criticize, I violate a dogma of our ideology. It is and will always be an immutable law: The Führer is always right, in all situations and at all times' (60).

Common to both the paranoid leader and the paranoid individual is the tendency to construct their truths in the solitude of their reflections and readings, looking down on formal learning or the exchange of ideas with others.

Paranoid character

> Around these [three] essential traits, contingent traits are grouped: [...] self-didacticism… (37).

Paranoid character. Clinical case

> I will never ask anyone to teach me anything, I fear they would mock me, I will wait for events to instruct me as they unfold (25).

Sectarian groups. *Set Free Christian Fellowship*

> According to former members and other sources, Pastor Phil has only two semesters of academic biblical education and is very negative about formal schooling. The master's degree in theology that Set Free's official spokespersons claim he holds is in reality the certificate from a correspondence course at a Florida academy… (20).

In young patients one can occasionally observe a history of academic failure alongside an all-consuming and exclusive intellectual dedication to a particular topic.

Sectarian groups. The Davidians

> Even before, at age 12, Vernon had demonstrated his extraordinary capacity for memorizing biblical texts, which contrasted with a history of poor school adjustment that led him to drop out without having completed his secondary education (17).

Sectarian groups. The Davidians

> Koresh, who is now 33 years old, memorized the New Testament when he was 12 and all the children in his class used to mock him for his difficulties keeping up in class (46).

Taken to the extreme, self-teaching allows one to dispense even with books.

Sectarian groups. Hermetic Philosophical Institute

> This knowledge I have not drawn from any book; I was born with this intuitive gift, which has manifested itself from the earliest years of my life (6).

Inflexibility

Delusions

> The common characteristic of all delusions developed in different ways is their fundamental immutability (36).

Indeed, the ideas of the IP do not change under the kind of influences that under normal conditions modify human convictions, even if only slightly. One of these influences is social pressure; it is well known that, in their interactions, people tend to establish consensuses, and through the discussion of matters they usually bring their positions closer together. But the IP is not greatly affected by the opinions of others, and the fact that they are not agreed with does not in any way lead them to wonder whether they might be mistaken.

Querulants

> He believed that the poor performance of his lawyers had caused him to lose his cases (48).

Not even the most tangible evidence modifies the opinions of the IPP or their fundamental positions, which are and will always be the true ones and which do not change.

Paranoid personality. Millon (2004)

> […] little inclined to consider objective evidence and reach rational conclusions (41).

Folie à famille. Clinical case

> Her mother maintained that she was pregnant, despite the evidence (42).

Sectarian groups. Truth Station

> A young man whom Gretchen referred to as David, who was 26 years old at the time she entered the cult, noticed the subtle power of the group when they pressured him to become more spiritual. As a demonstration of commitment to the group and to gain greater acceptance, he decided to stop taking insulin for his diabetes, in the belief that God would cure him. The members applauded his faith and encouraged him to throw away the insulin, which he did.
>
> Within days, David's health deteriorated visibly, and after a week the leader organized prayer teams around the clock. Gretchen's team was the one on duty when David breathed his last. Nevertheless, the group, spurred on by the leader's imperious exhortations, was convinced that David would rise again, and they prayed for fifteen hours beside the corpse (28).

He did not rise again. The failure of prophecies, even when given an exact date, does not affect the unshakeable faith in the group's truths either.

Cult groups. Divine Church of Salvation

> God was supposed to appear on *TV Channel 18* for the whole world on March 25. Having forewarned the faithful, God would then descend into the backyard of *3513 Ridgeland Way, Garland, Texas* on March 31. When God did not appear, Mr. Chen appeared before reporters looking contrite, yet retaining his prodigious powers of rationalization. He explained that God had not appeared because he wanted to test his faithful by exposing them to ridicule. The Almighty would descend, but not yet (57).

Blind faith is also unaffected by the death of those LPs who were supposedly immortal.

Cult groups. TFP

> The death of the group's leader, who was assumed to possess near-immortality, has necessitated a reworking of doctrine aimed at preserving his aura of supernaturalness: the ways of Our Lord are thus inscrutable... his sacrifice (that is, his illness) has brought us great graces, great conversions, people are more devout and more united to the cause... (45).

If the force of facts does not modify the convictions of the paranoid contagion group, neither does the weight of arguments.

> Paranoia
> Although the patient may admit that he is almost never or never able to provide conclusive evidence of the correctness of his views, any attempt to convince him of the delusional nature of his ideas bounces back as if off a wall (36).

> Delusions
> Jaspers (1959) saw delusion as a perverted vision of reality, held in an incorrigible manner, and which had the following characteristics:
> [...]
> (b) Inaccessible to logic (53).

> Paranoia
> [...] absolutely inaccessible to reason, passionate and stubborn in the defense of his ideas (36).

The fact is that logic and reasoning can make little impression if, as often happens, the paranoid contagion group adopts an openly anti-rationalist attitude.

> German nationalism
> There is no truth other than the national; the function of the scholar is not to spread objective knowledge, but to prepare the masses: 'Only one truth, one state of mind, one virtue must be conveyed' (16).

In other words, the national replaces the rational, which can still be expressed even more clearly.

> Nazism

> We National Socialists —thus formulated Schemm— are very skeptical toward this so-called objectivity. We are not objective, but absolutely subjective. German science must be subjective, that is, it must only be German science. All Germans must use their knowledge in favor of Germany. For us, everything that does not serve the German people is false and absurd. Everything that harms the German people is, for us, a crime (60).

Inflexibility is, at least to a certain degree, the consequence of a fully voluntary decision. Whoever has made the firm determination not to move from their initial positions will hardly do so.

> Paranoia
> To eliminate my faith," wrote a patient, "the voice of my deepest soul would have to be uprooted, the soul itself or my life would have to be destroyed: *per aspera ad astra* (36).

> Sokagakkai
> I propose to continue believing firmly and permanently in these truths because I know that they can bring the light of revitalization and understanding to the present darkness (33).

Deafness

So much so, that the Great Truth is something that must be *defended* against possible *attacks* or harmful influences from the surroundings.

> Other paranoid groups. The Sebastianisms of Pernambuco (19th century)
> ... since they were charged with 'defending the cause of the true Faith, the religion of Our Lord Jesus Christ and King Don Sebastián (51).

This defensive attitude necessarily leads to *not wanting to listen*, as this generates the risk of falling into error. Any idea different from one's own will arouse nothing but suspicion and a complete lack of interest…

> Querulants. Clinical case
> He explained his grievances and the legal difficulties with vehemence, with a certain circumstantiality and without the slightest doubt as to their validity or any desire to examine alternative points of view (39).

Delusion of grievance

Blinded by the fanaticism of right, disturbed by crude sophisms, victims of intense emotional excitement, the claimants remain incapable of reasoning about that which falls within their fixed idea. They accept only the judgments of others that conform to their affective state; they declare the rest of the judgments false and give them no consideration (52).

(…) or it will be dismissed without consideration.

Paranoia

Any assertion opposed to the patient's own assertion will simply be declared unworthy of trust and false... (36).

Cuban Leninism

No thinker before Marx nor any after him is recognized here (56).

Intolerance

From disinterest in the opinions of others, one easily transitions to open opposition to dialogue. The truth must be preserved, and dialogue and contact with one's surroundings can have no other consequence than a dangerous and unnecessary straying from the true faith.

Sokagakkai

The writings of Nichiren Daishonin, Buddhist philosophy, and countless real-life proofs conclusively demonstrate that True Buddhism is the Buddhism of Nichiren Daishonin... [the others]... are so weak that their leaders find themselves in a position of making pacts with other religious groups. What is the use of practicing a religion that compromises with other kinds of faith? Religions that do not draw distinctions between different kinds of faith are cowardly, mediocre, and weak (32).

Reformers. Robespierre

[...] he possessed the criterion of certainty, and any discussion irritated him, seemed to him inadmissible, incorrect, unpatriotic (19).

Sectarian groups. TFP

A work by Professor Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira is published in São Paulo that will also make an impact behind the Iron Curtain: *Unnoticed Ideological Transshipment and Dialogue*. See Part III: **Dialogue, the Talisman Word of International Communist Strategy** (12).

Indeed, dialogue makes little sense when one is not willing to concede anything.

Paranoid personality

It is typical that he is unwilling to 'give in' even on matters of no importance, since compromise solutions seem to him signs of weakness … (8).

Nazism

Christianity did not content itself with erecting its own altar; it was compelled to proceed to the destruction of the altars of paganism. This fanatical intolerance was the only thing that allowed the consolidation of that inflexible creed; it was an indispensable condition for its existence... Political parties are always willing to compromise; a worldview never is. Political parties make pacts with their rivals; worldviews proclaim their own infallibility (31).

Jealous. Clinical case

- He is a man who, if he says something is white, it has to be white... whatever he says has to be...

Querulants

The premorbid traits of litigant-querulant delusional disorder include the inability to compromise... (39).

The closest thing to dialogue that is acceptable to the IPP is *debate*, where the aim is neither to understand one another nor to learn, but to *win*.

Sectarian groups. TFP

Referring to the uncertainty and confusion in which Brazil —and ultimately all of the West— finds itself, Professor Plinio Corrêa de Oliveira points to the relativism of public opinion as the true culprit of the situation. Contemporary men do not see debates of ideas as a means of finding the truth. They regard them as dangerous sparks from which passionate controversies may arise, ultimately provoking the dreaded world war. Hence the advocacy for the end of

all polemics in favor of the *magic* formula of relativism: the search for truth in the middle ground, in the accommodation of all opinions, no matter how contradictory they may be (12).

Sokagakkai

Shakubuku is a method of propagating the Buddhism of Nichiren Shoshu. By practicing shakubuku, we praise the greatness of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism to other people such as family members, friends, associates, etc. Shakubuku means helping to refute people's mistaken concepts and helping them correct their understanding of Buddhism, giving them a correct view, as taught by Nichiren Daishonin (59).

Sokagakkai

The Otaru debate was a symbol of the recent developments in our work for kosen-rufu. This debate took place in 1955 in the city of Otaru, on the island of Hokkaido, between members of the Soka Gakkai —followers of the doctrine of Nichiren Shoshu— and representatives of the Minobu sect, which at the time enjoyed great prestige among the various sects that claimed to be heirs to the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin. By defeating their opponents in the debate, the members of the Soka Gakkai brought about a great change in the Japanese world of religion and made it clear to all that the true current of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism is found in the doctrine of Nichiren Shoshu (32).

In the end, the possession of truth authorizes the IGP to confront whoever stands in its way or simply thinks differently.

Sokagakkai

We must combat all other beliefs. And for this reason, our chances of making enemies are great. We deny every other religion (32).

Nazism

... national socialism is essentially totalitarian. A movement like ours is either convinced that its ideology and its practical consequences are correct, and then it cannot allow anyone beside it, or it is not, and then it does not deserve to hold power. We know that we possess the truth and, starting from this conviction, we cannot logically admit any serious competitor in the possession of power (Goebbels, cited in 60).

Sectarian groups. TFP

Evil and error, being nothing but the privation of good and truth, possess no entity of their own: they do not exist in themselves. And they cannot, as such, be the object of right or of tolerance. Therefore, just as good and truth must be loved and defended, evil and error must be hated and combated (13).

Absolutism and lack of nuance

Factor QIV of the 16PF test

They tend toward drastic and immediate solutions and reject dialogue, that is, engaging with nuance (34).

Paranoid personality

They are drawn to simplistic formulations of the world and frequently distrust ambiguous situations (2).

Some beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses constitute a good example of this simplism. For instance, the belief that *all* religions (and *all* political systems) share the same malevolent origin. Without further nuance, and against all anthropological, historical, or linguistic evidence, they assert that when the various linguistic communities of Babylon dispersed across the five continents, they took their religion with them, which explains the similarities existing among the different pagan religions of the planet.

Simplism –the tendency to eliminate complexities– means that the paranoid contagion group, in its analysis of any phenomenon, tends to find a *single cause*. It is uncomfortable with the idea that multiple motives may exist, acting in variable and unknown proportions.

Nazism

The mixing of blood and the inherent undermining of racial level constitute the sole and exclusive reason for the collapse of ancient civilizations... (31).

Sectarian groups. TFP

> This terrible enemy has a name: it is called Revolution. Its deep cause is an explosion of pride and sensuality that inspired, not a system, we would say, but an entire chain of ideological systems (15).

Sokagakkai

> The following day, from ten in the morning until six in the evening and practically without pause, he continued the tradition that Tsunesaburo Makiguchi had established: he listened to local members and guided them on the wide variety of problems they brought to him. With sincerity and compassion, he listened to people speak of health problems, economic hardships, marital complications, doubts relating to faith, and many other things. He told them all that the cause of their suffering was their karma, and that if they had firm faith in Buddhism they could transform their karma and free themselves from so much adversity (32).

Doubtful questions, or those fraught with nuance, are habitually resolved with a categorical *yes* or *no*, with intermediate solutions being avoided.

Leninism. Shining Path

> - So, do those democratically elected governments not represent the people?
> - The people are represented by whoever carries out their interests. Everything else is just talk (7).

Always and *never* will form part of the frequently used vocabulary, more so than *sometimes* or *perhaps*.

Nationalist utopia. The social contract

> Furthermore, the sovereign body being formed by private individuals, it has no interest, nor can it have any, contrary to theirs; consequently, the sovereignty has no need to give any guarantee to the subjects, since it is impossible for the body to wish to harm all its members. We shall see further on that it cannot harm any one of them in particular. The sovereign, by the mere fact of being so, is always what it ought to be (47).

Paranoid simplism tends almost always to delineate two opposing and well-defined camps: that of good and that of evil.

Sectarian groups. Hermetic Philosophical Institute

> According to the transcendental parameters of Nature, the absolute good for the human being is: Everything that causes man to awaken from environmental hypnosis, allowing him to access progressively higher states of consciousness, which will lead him to an ascending vertical evolution.
> In contrast, evil is everything that prevents the awakening of man's superior consciousness; everything that contributes directly or indirectly to keeping him hypnotized, preventing him from evolving or causing his involution (6).

Sectarian groups. TFP

> In the meetings known as "Environments, customs and civilizations," members are taught to distinguish the divine from the demonic, through the analysis of photographs.
> Thus, in the image of a sorcerer from an African tribe, or in that of a rock singer, one can see the incontinence of gestures, the fights, the screaming and the unleashing of instincts that the demon encourages.
> One must learn to see precisely the opposite in the photograph of an English mace-bearer, clean, dignified, upright, in complete mastery of his being, or in a photograph of the Vienna Boys' Choir, a reflection on earth of heaven (45).

Their prophecies also tend toward dichotomous and simplistic extremism; either catastrophe or a glorious future.

Sectarian groups. TFP

> [...] the TFP displays a large banner at its main headquarters in São Paulo, with the following legend: "With the Constituent Assembly, Brazil reaches the crossroads: will it take the path of communist collapse or rise to the height of Christian greatness? (12).

And, for individuals, absolute happiness or complete perdition. A truth that can in no way be contradicted.

Sokagakkai

> –Not a single person who does not believe in True Buddhism can today call themselves happy, even though in their darkness they may think they are content (32).

The same orientation toward extremes becomes apparent when it comes to judging people.

> Paranoid personality
>
> Tends to see some as 'completely bad' and loses the ability to perceive any positive quality that the person may have (58).

It must be added that they also tend to make biased judgments in the opposite direction. On occasion the IGP may show itself to be unjustifiably favorable in its evaluation of others, idealizing and refusing to see the negative aspects of a person or social system.

> Sectarian groups. TFP
>
> In fact, the affective nature of Spanish Americans, united with a deep-rooted Catholicism, meant that social relations were not only governed by a sense of justice, but also imbued with a true and generous love of neighbor. What the left tends to dismissively call *paternalism* —which they consider one of the most intolerable 'bacwardnesses' of Hispanic countries— is in truth a high moral quality, the fruit of what we might call the Catholic instinct; reciprocal affection transformed into a unifying principle of all classes. By that instinct, those who have more are compelled to protect those who have less; protection to which the latter respond with forms of dedication that could be compared to a voluntary feudal bond. This explains why it has been so difficult to promote class struggle in Spanish America; not only because the upper classes were admired and respected, but also because between them and the people there existed an entire living web of personal ties marked by a reciprocal goodwill, which naturally engenders the desire for collaboration rather than conflict (14).

The IPP renders its judgments quickly and on the basis of a few circumstances to which it grants maximum relevance, setting aside other equally important aspects that would in all likelihood nuance the final verdict. For example, a person's political sympathies may be the only thing that matters about them and may disproportionately determine their future.

> Maoist Leninism
>
> Whoever takes the side of the revolutionary people is a revolutionary. Whoever takes the side of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism is a counterrevolutionary (40).

Thus, the dichotomous orientation of paranoid thinking eliminates the middle ground and shades of gray.

> Paranoid personality. Millon (2004)

> […] black-and-white thinkers (41).

Lasègue's delusion of persecution

> Little by little the vagueness fades... (38).

The aversion to relativism is not limited to questions that are, so to speak, more ideological or susceptible to controversy, but extends to any problem.

Delusions

> We formed four groups of patients; 13 (group S) with a diagnosis of schizophrenia, who were experiencing delusions but also had other symptoms, such as hallucinations, thought disorder, or impaired functioning; 14 patients (group P) diagnosed with delusional disorders or paranoia, in whom the delusion was the sole or prominent symptom; 14 anxious control patients (group A); and 13 normal controls (group N). The groups were matched for sex, age, and scores on the Mill Hill Vocabulary Scale.
>
> The subjects were invited to participate in a reasoning task, in which they were asked to make a judgment as to which of two jars, hidden from view, was the one from which beads were being drawn, having been informed of the proportion of beads of a particular color in each jar. The task materials included two sets of two jam jars, each containing one hundred beads, 85 of one color (for example, yellow) and 15 of another (for example, black), with the inverse proportion in the other two jars. The first task consisted of deciding with certainty which of the two jars (now hidden) had been selected, on the basis of being able to see beads drawn from (and replaced in) one of the two jars. The subject was shown as many items of information as they wished before reaching a decision. In the second test, in which we studied not only belief formation but also its maintenance/change, jars with beads of different colors were used, but in the same proportions. In this test, subjects were not asked to reach a decision; instead, they were shown beads a set number of times and were asked at each stage to give their estimate of the probability that a particular jar had been selected. At first, the draws favor one hypothesis, but after ten draws, by which point almost all subjects have already reached a certain decision, the beads, apparently still from the same jar, begin to favor the opposing hypothesis.
>
> [...] In this study, a considerable number (41%) of the delusional subjects reached a conclusion on the basis of a single item of information, compared with only one (4%) of the controls.

> They were also quicker than the controls to respond to new and potentially contradictory information (24).

Just as the balls are, for delusional patients, either black or yellow (fleeing at full speed from any ambiguity), so too does everyone, for the paranoid contagion group, end up placed either in the camp of good or in the camp of evil — a process that often requires forcibly simplifying a reality that is always more complex and nuanced.

> Maoist Leninism
>
> Among the whites in the USA, only the reactionary ruling circles are those who oppress Black people. They do not represent in any way the workers, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals and other reasonable personalities who constitute the overwhelming majority of whites (40).

Intermediate situations, if any exist, are unstable and necessarily end up leaning one way or the other.

> Sectarian groups. TFP
>
> A 'semi-counter-revolutionary' greatly opposed to the paroxysms of the Revolution has a son less opposed to them, a grandson indifferent to them, and a great-grandson fully integrated into the revolutionary current (15).

Idiosyncratic thought and interests

> Paranoia
>
> [...] deals with strange matters… (36).

> Delusion of grievance
>
> In certain fanatics or reformers, errors of judgment only apply to abstract ideas, formulated in more or less strange theories, the product of imagination or dreams (52).

> Factor QIV of the 16PF test
>
> [...] eccentric (34).

It is also said of subjects with a high score on factor QIV of the 16PF test that they are distinguished by their propensity for *unconventional interests*.

And furthermore, paranoid thinking —even when dealing with *ordinary matters*— arrives at conclusions that seem inaccessible, strange and devoid of common sense (that of the majority), making it difficult to understand the way in which the IGP reaches such conclusions.

> Delusions
>
> Jaspers (1959) saw delusion as a perverted vision of reality, maintained in an incorrigible manner, and which had the following characteristics:
>
> (a) The absurdity [...] are manifest to others (53).

> Paranoid personality
>
> The thought processes and perceptual experiences seem strange and idiosyncratic (58).

> Delusion of interpretation
>
> [...] affective reasonings whose starting point —exact— determines paradoxical or chimerical conclusions… (52).

> Lasègue's delusion of persecution
>
> Once on this slope, the imagination does not stop; having attempted vague explanations, the alienated individual ends up arriving at the most absurd interpretations… (38).

In the work of Spero (54) in which he compared the Rorschach test of 50 cult members before treatment and after six months from the start of psychoanalytic therapy, the former members evolved from an initial state in which the percentage of F+ responses (positive form) was barely 39.6% (extraordinarily low with respect to normality) to 76.4%, a change that can hardly be attributed to psychotherapy in itself. This is the variable of the test that was most powerfully modified and returned to normality. In the Rorschach test, F+ responses are those in which the form is correctly perceived, and a decrease in their percentage indicates a disturbance of thought. The members, like many mentally ill patients, tend to perceive forms in an incorrect manner, although after leaving the group they are capable of doubling the percentage of F+ responses and returning to the normality in which they were presumably found before joining the group.

Yet, in reality, the criterion of *correctness* is merely statistical. That form is correctly perceived which the majority recognizes as correctly perceived, and vice versa. F- responses, rather than being "wrong," simply reflect a way of perceiving reality that differs from the common or majority way.

The same degree of departure from normal patterns of thought can be appreciated in the discourses of the LP.

> Cult groups. Divine Church of Salvation
> What is strange is not that Mr. Chen persuaded 150 Taiwanese members of the Divine Church of Salvation to move to Garland [Texas] in the hope of being taken up by a flying saucer made of tin cans (57).

Even when the claims are not as grotesque as this one, they remain unexpected and disconcerting.

> Cult groups. TFP
> By gravely harming the right to property, Land Reform constitutes a clear violation of the seventh and tenth commandments of the Law of God: Thou shalt not steal and Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods (12).

> Mystical delusion. Clinical case
> One of my patients, a mystic with no intellectual deterioration whatsoever, who had once been married without the ice of her senses ever having melted, who always felt a profound disgust for the sexual act, rejects the mystery of communion, since the real presence at the moment of transubstantiation is for her a phenomenon that recalls the carnal act (19).

> Leninism. Shining Path
> - But, do you take into account that the president inherited a truly catastrophic social, political, military and economic situation?
> - That business about inheritance is a bourgeois concept... (7).

> Sectarian groups. TFP
> For two decades Spain has been bombarded by the deceitful smile of a false ecumenism. Hiding behind this smile, a terrible cultural revolution has carried out, in a climate of apparent

> normality, the most complete destruction of values and institutions since the Moors invaded our soil (11).

The absurdity of paranoid thinking facilitates the hypertrophy of the characteristic biases of the paranoid contagion group. Its peculiar reasonings and observations allow it to argue, justify and inflate its pride and feelings of superiority, to identify and demonize imaginary enemies, to predict imminent and inevitable catastrophes, to transform its authoritarian violence into goodness, etc. Let us look at an example of how superiority is justified in the most implausible and rigorous-lacking manner.

> Nazism
>
> ... the organization of the Russian state was not the result of the state-political capacity of the Slavic people, but rather, above all, a wonderful example of the formative efficacy of the Germanic element upon an inferior race... For many centuries Russia lived off this Germanic nucleus of its upper classes. This nucleus today can practically be said to have been eliminated and extinguished almost completely. In its place stands the Jew... (60).

> Nazism
>
> It is very important for the future that the Germans do not mix with the Poles, so that the new Germanic blood is not transmitted to the Polish ruling class. Himmler is right when he states that the Polish generals who truly offered serious resistance in 1939 were, so to speak, of exclusively German descent. It is a proven fact that it is precisely the best elements of our race who, losing consciousness of their origin, join the ruling class of the country that has taken them in... (30).

The bias of enmity leads, for example, to attributing to enemies maneuvers that common sense sees as impossible.

> Sectarian groups. TFP
>
> The metamorphosis of contemporary communism, which includes the self-dismantling of communist States, is destined to give rise to more radical, pre-anarchic forms of collectivism. It is the passage from the communist State to communism without a State, to the so-called self-managed socialism. This, in turn, draws inspiration from the primitive tribe, from Rousseau's noble savage or Engels's admirable Iroquois. And the cultural revolution

> underway in the West, for example the one promoted by the PSOE in Spain, tends in a more or less declared manner toward this neo-tribal goal (13).

Acute psychoses

> He accused his wife of having extramarital relations with his father and his brother (9).

Extreme catastrophism manifests itself in completely distorted interpretations of reality.

Sectarian-Leninist groupuscule. SLA

> Zoya, isolated in her own fantasy world, described in great detail how happy the poor would be to receive free food at capitalist supermarkets, paid for by the Hearsts [...] 'Of course they will come to get food —said Zoya— the people need food, they are dying of hunger' (29).

And it is perhaps in messianic projections where the lack of contact with reality can unfold with fewer constraints. If the messianic projects of paranoid contagion groups are distinguished by anything, it is precisely by their lack of realism. They are plans that *common sense* (that of the majority) dismisses as impracticable.

Unspecified cult group

> When I began telling him about my family's problems, I burst into tears and he consoled me by hugging me and telling me not to worry, that he was going to find some solution. That was when he spoke to me for the first time about 'The Family'.
>
> From that day on, every time we met he would tell me that he was working on a project that consisted of creating a family of the future.
>
> His theory was based on the idea that the pace of life in today's society made the development of a true family impossible, due to the many obligations a father with two or three jobs had to fulfill, and who therefore was hardly ever at home.
>
> To this he added that most fathers had no true vocation for fatherhood and found themselves pushed into it by the arrival of children, without it being their genuine desire and without any knowledge, causing more harm than good to their own children.
>
> On the other hand, there exist a few —he would say— who truly feel within themselves the need to be parents and possess genuine training and knowledge to achieve it, and who could, in some way, relieve the former of an imposed obligation.

> His answer to this situation was to create a kind of 'superfamily', where a capable couple would fulfill the roles of father and mother, taking as their children all those young people who, in their own homes, had parents who did not act as such.
> In this way, those forced against their will to be parents would be freed from children they do not want, but whom, due to cultural conditioning, they do not dare say so; and on the other hand, it would give the children of these households the possibility of belonging to a true family that loves them, protects them, and nurtures their capacities as a person... Hence the name 'The Family', capitalized, that he gave to his project.
> Although it may seem unbelievable, at that moment I found logic in the reasoning and began to observe my parents' attitudes more closely, which confirmed it (5).

The inventions of the IP also defy the limitations imposed by common sense.

> Paranoia
> [...] builds a perpetual motion machine or a dirigible (36).

For their part, the justifications for the mistreatment inflicted by some cult leaders border on the ridiculous and can only be taken seriously by someone whose way of reasoning is quite distorted.

> Cult groups. Baba and his Family
> *Baba is teaching us a lesson'*. This is the ultimate defensive explanation with which Baba and the Family members could justify any act of cruelty, sexual abuse, or grotesque inconsistency. The explanations were always tied to the central precepts of the group. Thus, a woman who had suffered sexual abuse at the hands of Baba was clinging excessively to her virginity, the extravagance with the jacuzzi was meant to teach detachment from money. Once the notion of surrender to Baba came to be a spiritual end, any mistreatment, particularly if it had no cause, contained within itself its own explanation, 'he is teaching us to surrender' (18).

Paralogia

> Paranoid personality. Millon (2004)

> […] Gradually, a series of unconnected facts become intertwined in a fabric that reveals the edges of a dark conspiracy (41).

> Persecuted-persecutors
>
> [...] a great facility with words. They speak at length and with eloquence, argue with a great variety of arguments [...] they engage in lengthy elaborations to set out the facts and justify their complaints and accusations against their enemies and persecutors. They often deploy a very compact line of argumentation and surprise their interlocutors with the wealth of evidence they appear to bring forward in support of all their claims (44).

In their various forms, the *folies raisonnantes* were distinguished from Lasègue's delusion of persecution by their intensive use of logical argumentation, of reasoning (as their name indicates). But it would soon become evident that what is involved is in reality a different kind of logic, whose presence can be glimpsed, even without it being possible to specify exactly what it consists of.

Paralogia is a term used by certain classical authors, especially French ones, which has today disappeared from standard psychiatric vocabulary, having been replaced by expressions such as "illogicality" (3).

> Querulants. Clinical case
>
> It reminds us of having observed in Ville-Evrard one of those patients, a former president of a court in Algeria, who was capable of reducing the wisest of jurists to silence with an overflowing legal argumentation: we were able to verify this on several occasions. The power of conviction of these patients is such that, even with a forewarned mind, one *feels* that there is a crack in their reasoning, but the weak point is not discovered … (19).

Thus, the IP uses a logic different from the common one, a logic that the clinician usually detects promptly and with which the IP arrives at its unusual conclusions. For example:

> Paranoia. The Aimée Case
>
> In March of 192... she gives birth to a girl who is born dead. The diagnosis is asphyxia due to nuchal cord. A great shock occurs in the patient. She attributes the misfortune to her enemies; she suddenly seems to concentrate all responsibility on a woman who for three years had been her closest friend. Working in a distant village, she telephoned shortly after the birth to

> receive news. This seemed strange to Aimée; the hostile crystallization appears to date back to that moment (37).

The most evident difference between the paranoid logic and the common one lies, perhaps, in the following: the IP transforms into incontestable evidence what are no more than possibilities. It does not assert "A may mean that B," but rather "A means B." And that is that; there is nothing more to discuss or to investigate.

> The Jealous
>
> [...] this is the case of the woman cited by Dumas, who, jealous of a Spanish woman, finds her husband smoking a Spanish cigar and immediately mistreats him in the middle of the street.
>
> The misinterpretation is evident, since nothing entitles that jealous woman to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between the nationality of her supposed rival and the origin of a cigar: an affective reasoning, which has dispensed with all rational objections, has led to this error of logic (19).

> Delusion of grievance
>
> When a pardon is granted to them, it is one more proof that they are in their right, that they are feared, and they continue their campaign (52).

These two quotes reveal to us how a possible causal relationship, one among many, is transformed by the IP into an unquestionable causal relationship. Furthermore, that possibility which the IP transforms into something self-evident often strikes us, at first glance, as hardly plausible. That is to say, the IP does not opt for the possibility that seems most natural or straightforward.

> Sectarian-Leninist groupuscule. SLA
>
> Cin also informed me that the newspapers had estimated that the food program requested by the SLA would cost around four hundred million dollars and that my father had announced on television that he had no way of paying four hundred million dollars for my release. And my mother had stood beside him in front of all the television cameras wearing a black dress. That meant, Cin said, that she was already in mourning. They would rather see me dead than yield any money or their power, Cin proclaimed (29).

On the other hand, this preference for unlikely explanations is guided, most of the time, though not always, by two underlying driving forces: pride and prejudice.

> Unspecified cult group
>
> In an Eastern meditation cult, a woman gave birth to a child without the help of any medical professional, and the baby took several minutes to breathe. The group's guru, who attended her during labor, managed after several attempts to get the baby to breathe. The members of the group are now convinced that the guru has a miraculous healing ability, and the child —who is mentally retarded— is seen as proof of the guru's love, rather than the result of his contempt for proper medical care (55).

> Sectarian-Leninist groupuscule. SLA
>
> What did the SLA have against Foster [then a well-known progressive Black leader]?
> 'He was a pig,' she replied. 'The people hated him. He wanted to give an identification card to every school child in Oakland, to identify the potentially violent ones and send them to prison to be reprogrammed. That is what Hitler did. And that would be the beginning of concentration camps in fascist Amerikkka.
> The members of the SLA had attended City Council meetings in Oakland to follow the progress of Marcus Foster's proposals to stop violence in Oakland schools. She told me that the SLA had reached the conclusion that the only way to stop his identification program was to kill him. Fahizah insisted to me that the SLA knew that Foster was an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency, and Robert Blackburn, his assistant, was also a CIA agent whose true mission was to serve as his bodyguard. Did not Blackburn always carry a diplomatic briefcase? Well, she said, inside the diplomatic briefcase he had a submachine gun. What is more, when Foster and Blackburn were shot, had not Blackburn immediately crouched down and tried to escape following a zigzag pattern? Did that not prove that he had been trained by the CIA? (29).

To argue its claims, paranoid thinking knows how to force logic in such a way that, from any starting point, it is capable of corroborating its preestablished ideas.

> Reformers

> [Referring to the "premorbid" characteristics of these subjects…] the almost exclusively affective reasoning that conditions the elements of knowledge according to the goal to be achieved and not according to their normal relativity (19).

Thus, if the aim is to uphold the notion that Jews are wicked, paranoid thinking will know how to see in their actions the depravity that is innate to them, whatever they may do.

> As Sartre rightly says, antisemitism is a passion, but no antisemite will admit to proceeding except by reason. Nevertheless, and in violation of the principle of contradiction, the foundation of Aristotelian logic, the antisemite will say successively — and even simultaneously — that the Jew is a banker and a Bolshevik, miserly and extravagant, confined to hisghetto and meddling everywhere. It is clear that under such conditions the Jew has no escape:*Whatever* he says, does, or thinks will fall within the jurisdiction of antisemitism; it will serve him equally well to be generous as to be mean, dirty as clean, elegant as slovenly, timid as bold, religious as atheist. The antisemite's logic is iron-clad; if an Aryan succeeds in business, he will be praised and held up as an example of tenacity; but if he is a Jew, he will be pointed to as an expression of greed. If an Aryan is intelligent and succeeds in his studies, he will be regarded as a model of a superior man; but if he is a Jew, the antisemite will hasten to demonstrate how typical it is of the race to distance itself from the noble toils of farming and ranching; and if he has stayed with his parents in some colony in Entre Ríos, he will tell us that, despite all his ambition, atavistic incapacity has prevented him from rising above his condition as a farmer, which proves that Jews are not as intelligent as they claim. If a Jew like Haber contributes to German military science, the antisemite will argue that, as always, Israelite intelligence is in the service of destruction; but if Haber had limited himself to applying an Aryan formula, he would have contended that once again the Judaic mentality proved to be merely analytical. If the Jew does not go to war, even for physical reasons, he will be singled out as a coward or a shirker; but if he does go, the antisemite will find a way to denounce his clumsy pretension to fight beneath the folds of a national banner that is not his own. And God forbid he die as a hero, for it will only prove that he is capable of going to the worst extremes in order to infiltrate a homeland that does not belong to him.
> There is nothing to be done: antisemitism is of such a nature that it feeds on anything. The Jew is in such a situation that anything he does or says, or that is said about him, favorable or unfavorable, ultimately serves to fan the sacred flame of antisemitism. And if one does not address the problem, the antisemite will say it is because they are indefensible;but if one

> does address it, he will claim that*there must be something*in the race for its defense to be constantly necessary.
>
> Nevertheless, the antisemite refuses to admit that he is the plaything of a passion; he believes, wants to believe, or wants us to believe that he proceeds rationally, on the basis of critical analysis, through observation and experience of life,*scientifically*.
>
> The prestige of reason and science is so great in our time that they are even invoked to commit the greatest follies. Now then: when a scientist finds a liquid that expands when frozen, he will not say that*all*liquids expand when frozen; whereas when an antisemite encounters a cowardly Jew, he immediately proclaims that*all*Jews are cowards (50).

But paralogy serves not only to*demonize*, but also allows one to resolve all contradictions and to see as*good, coherent, or well-intentioned*one's own leaders or those whom the IP considers members of its own group, even against all evidence.

> Messianic movements. Sabbatai Zevi (17th century)
>
> The sultan gives him a tragic ultimatum: if Sabbatai Zevi does not immediately convert to Islam, his head will be cut off. It is a painful, terrible scene, in which the king of the Jews, against all expectations, agrees… to convert to Islam.
>
> The sultan, magnanimous, immediately baptizes him with the name of AzizMehmedEffendi and entrusts him with the post of 'guardian of the palace gates,' that is, royal doorkeeper, with a daily salary of 150 aspers. A few days later, he sends for his wife, who also capitulates. Sarah becomes FatimaKadı.
>
> Why this scandalous conversion? Thousands of lines have already been dedicated to this incredible event. Some simply consider that Zeví was not equal to his pretensions and showed cowardice. Others believe he wanted to spare the Jewish community a bloody repression. However, for the Sabbatians most fanatical, those who would follow their Savior to the end, the apostasy has a mysterious and messianic meaning. Evoking the debates of the era, Gershom Scholem speaks of a 'necessary descent into darkness'. The messiah must debase himself, must descend to the lowest depths, in order to recover there the divine sparks and hasten redemption. His apostasy is situated within the cult of transgression. It posits as a principle that the messiah's mission consists in taking on all evils in order to unburden the universe (10).

It is no surprise that, very frequently, the arguments seem somewhat *far-fetched*. Ingenuity is not always capable of tracing simple explanations.

> Sectarian groups. TFP
>
> Another objection to our work could come from the fact that certain Protestant cults are of an austerity that borders on the excessive. How, then, can all of Protestantism be explained as an explosion of the desire to enjoy life?
>
> Even here, the objection is not difficult to resolve. Upon penetrating certain environments, the Revolution found the love of austerity very much alive. Thus, a 'clot' was formed. And, although it may have achieved there, in matters of pride, all manner of triumphs, it did not attain similar successes in matters of sensuality. In such environments, life is enjoyed through the discreet delights of pride, and not through the coarse pleasures of the flesh (15).

Interpretation of texts

This *sui generis* logic that always leads to a predetermined end is applied not only to the interpretation of current or past events, as we saw in the previous examples, but also to the interpretation of writings, whose meaning undergoes the most astonishing distortions.

> Falangism
>
> [...] in the hands of Julià Andreu, Quevedo's indictment against tyranny is transformed into the following lesson:
>
> The doctrinal content of *Marco Bruto* by Quevedo —which is the thesis and mission of the Falange— warns that all the great problems of our life must be posed and resolved in accordance with a strictly Spanish, fanatically Spanish criterion (49).

> Nazism
>
> ... It will also be necessary... that all the evidently distorted and superstitious texts of the New Testament be removed and that one renounce above all the theology of mercy and inferiority of the rabbi Paul... If we extract from the Gospel what speaks to our German hearts, then the essential core of Jesus's dogma stands out clearly and brilliantly, that which is in complete accordance with the demands of National Socialism, and of this we can be proud (60).

The paralogy of the IPP proves particularly fruitful when interpreting ancient prophecies, in such a way that the great signs once foretold always become visible in one's surroundings.

> Paranoia. Clinical case
>
> A patient feels that God endows him with a special capacity to interpret the Bible. Specifically, the signs heralding the Apocalypse are said to be occurring right now. 'Unification of countries' is the European Union, the modern version of the ancient Roman Empire. 'Iron and clay'... countries that are unified but not culturally unified...

Idiotization

We have already mentioned on more than one occasion the work of Spero (54) in which the tests of individuals who had recently left cult groups, or who were beginning to distance themselves from them and starting psychoanalytic treatment with the author, were compared with the tests of those same patients six months after the beginning of therapy.

As it turned out, a surprising and unexpected finding was that the results of the verbal and manipulative intelligence quotients improved significantly over that period of time. So did the total number of responses on the Rorschach test (R), a nonspecific indicator of what we might call the "degree of utilization of intelligence."

VariablePre-treatment meanMean at six months

Verbal IQ113.9118.1

Performance IQ102.4118.8

R 15'222'18

Despite being an anecdotal discovery, not corroborated by other similar studies (which, as far as I know, have not been carried out), the data suggest the possibility that cult membership could present with a mild and reversible decrease in intelligence. In fact, this is something that should not be so surprising; parents and family members of cult members recount time and again how they observe a notable impairment of reflective capacity, stereotyped thinking, a lack of creativity, etc.

If this hypothetical intellectual blockage in cult members were due to their paranoidization, one might expect it to occur also in IP individuals and in members of SP.

Regarding the former, clinical observation allows one to appreciate that although they can be extraordinarily effective and brilliant in relation to their limited field of interests and ambitions, they are often quite useless individuals, lacking practical sense in everything else. Psychometric tests suggest something similar.

> Factor QIV of the 16PF test
> [...] appears indifferent, though not necessarily unaware, of practical matters (34).

A possible explanation for the intellectual impairment could lie in the loss of interest in everything that falls outside the limited repertoire of ideas that obsess them.

> Delusion of grievance
> The delusion of reinterpretation can be defined as a chronic systematized psychosis characterized by the exclusive predominance of a fixed idea that imposes itself upon the mind in an obsessive manner... (52).

> Reformers
> But the ideal of justice, the thirst for equity that torments these restless minds leaves no room for any other passion [or interest]… (19).

All of the IP's mnemonic and reflective effort tends to revolve around their fixed idea, which can convey an image of erudition or intellectual rigor.

> Delusion of reinterpretation
> The litigant, who has originally acquired their condition and has supported it upon a solid bundle of evidence... (52).

> Querulants
> The understanding and memory of the querulant person appear at first to be preserved; one is often surprised by their precision in reciting from memory, word for word, voluminous official documents, judicial examinations and passages of the law (36).

But the truth is that even with regard to their specific field of interests, their understanding of the substance of matters is markedly distorted.

> Querulants
>
> The querulant ends up being 'hypercompetent' with the letter of the law, but cannot understand its spirit (39).

> Reformers
>
> [Referring to the 'premorbid' characteristics of these subjects…] the more apparent than real erudition made up of recent and poorly coordinated acquisitions (19).

> Paranoia
>
> With more conscientious observation, however, it is often found that the patient did not understand the meaning of his statements and interprets the clearest phrases in a quite peculiar way, even inverting their meaning (36).

That totalitarian societies could produce a slight *idiotization reversible* of their fanatical subjects is a possibility that we cannot entirely rule out, however implausible it may seem to us.

Falsification of memory

> Paranoia
>
> It seems to me that we are faced with a rather rare disorder that sometimes plays a certain role in the origin of delusions, that is, the falsification of memory. When examining his past experiences, the patient's eyes are open. He now clearly perceives many details that he had not noticed at all before and which now seem to him of the greatest importance. His memory, or so he thinks, has been considerably strengthened, so that his entire life appears to him as an open book. He remembers exactly how, as a child, he was snatched from his genuine parents in a beautiful castle… (36).

The distortion of memories, without doubt, plays an important role in jealousy, in resentment, in the guilt induced by sectarian groups, etc. We already know that the Maoist reeducation process led many to acknowledge their past participation in counterrevolu-

tionary activities, and to repent of their own wickedness. It probably also plays a role in the distortion that adepts carry out of their pre-cult life, always portrayed as wretched and unhappy.

Linguistic Style

I include in this chapter on cognitive style a brief mention of the *linguistic style*, as paranoid behavior is also reflected in a particular *way of expressing oneself*, in which three distinctive traits can be highlighted: grandiloquence, forcefulness, and affectation.

> Paranoid personality
> [...] grandiloquent... (1).

> Querulants
> The premorbid traits of litigant-querulant delusional disorder include [...] a pompous way of expressing oneself (39).

A way of expressing oneself that is also evident in written texts.

> Querulants
> The writings are characteristic; they use emphatic and bombastic formulas, insults, defamations; they are abundant and prolix, repeated frequently as if the expressions had a definitive character. Some words are underlined two or three times, and the patient often makes use of two or three colors of ink in order to strike the minds of their readers more vividly (19).

> Paranoia
> Already in its formal aspect, in the underlinings, exclamations, questions and quotations, in the emphasis on certain passages of forceful language through different handwriting or the use of colored ink, in addition to the monotonous, circumstantial and at length developed content, these documents tend to reveal their pathological origin (36).

And so,

> Maoist Leninism

Thousands and thousands of martyrs have heroically offered their lives in the interest of the people. Let us hold their banner high and advance along the path stained with their blood! (40).

Anabaptist messianisms. Thomas Müntzer (16th century)

A large part of the population rises up, but in vain. Müntzer takes the road to Bohemia and publishes a manifesto of extreme violence, calling for the formation of a Church of the Elect: 'The Time of the harvest has come and God has hired me for his harvest. I have sharpened my scythe, for my thoughts are directed toward the truth, and my lips, my hands, my skin, my hair, my soul, my body and my life curse the unbelievers'. The least one can say is that the character is inflamed (10).

Nationalism

It must be said with the utmost firmness: 'War is the only remedy for sick nations!' As soon as the State cries out: 'My existence and I myself are in danger!', all social selfishness must be set aside and all partisan hatred must be silenced. The individual must forget his ego and feel himself a member of a whole [...] That is precisely where the greatness of war lies, in that the small man disappears completely before the grandiose concept of the State (27).

A second characteristic of the IP's assertions is that they are forceful, categorical, drastic.

Maoist Leninism

The socialist system will eventually replace the capitalist system; this is an objective law, independent of the will of man (40).

Nationalist utopia. The social contract

Youth is not childhood. There is in nations, as in men, a period of youth, or if you will of maturity, which must be awaited before subjecting them to the law; but this period of maturity, in a people, is not always easy to recognize, and if one anticipates it, the labor is in vain. There are peoples who are susceptible to discipline from birth; others who are not even after ten centuries. The Russians will not be truly civilized because they were so too soon. Peter the Great had the imitative genius, not the true genius, which consists in creating and achieving everything from nothing. He did some good things: most were untimely. He saw his people steeped in barbarism, but he did not see that they were not in the required state of maturity,

> and he wished to civilize them, when what needed to be done was to harden them for war. He wished to make a people of Germans or Englishmen, when he should have begun by making them Russians, and he prevented his subjects from ever becoming what they were destined to be by having persuaded them that they possessed the degree of civilization which they still lacked, in the manner of the tutor who shapes his pupil to shine in his childhood and thereafter to be eclipsed forever. The Russian empire will wish to subjugate Europe and will be subjugated. The Tartars, its vassals, will become its masters and ours: this revolution seems to me inevitable. All the kings of Europe are working to hasten it (47).

Nazism

"The true insurgents appear in the dock only as witnesses...

In his preliminary statement before the tribunal, which lasts four hours, he declares:

> 'I assume full responsibility but declare that I am not a criminal; that I do not consider myself a criminal. I cannot plead guilty, but I profess the deed. There can be no high treason against the traitors of 1918! (60).

With a certain frequency, the PPI uses an affected vocabulary, excessively refined, technical, or characteristic of a professional jargon.

> *Folie à deux*. Clinical case
> Coherent and prolix speech was observed in both of them, with very abundant technical pedagogical terms, as both had obtained their teaching degree, and certain mannerisms (23).

This peculiarity may lend them an air of seriousness and credibility, or, quite to the contrary, leave them looking out of place. Some PPIs attempt to use precise medical terminology.

> Paranoia. Clinical case
> - I want them to run some tests on me because I am afraid this will lead me to my demise.

> Paranoia. Clinical case
> - It is to corroborate whether there is a presence of harmful agents... it is not a fact that suffering poisoning satisfies me....

Others use the same type of language in the legal domain.

> Querulants. Clinical case
>
> - Following my counsel's advice, I filed a criminal complaint...

At bottom, it is a matter of projecting a good image at all costs.

> Paranoiac character. Clinical case
>
> [...] who tells us: 'You will surely notice, sir, by the way in which I express myself, that I am not in the least unintelligent' (25).

But it is also a matter of achieving a strictly technical communication, in which any emotional or personal element remains completely aside.

> Querulants. Clinical case
>
> I know of a person whose life revolves around lawsuits and who has printed, at his own expense, an 11-page summary of the 42 legal actions in a custody dispute case. In the printed document he refers to himself in the third person and in a legalistic manner ('the accused'), just as Kraepelin described (48).

Conviction and revelation

The absolute certainty with which the IPP pontificates cannot always be attributed to its accurate reasoning, since, on other occasions, *the truth* has been revealed, shown, or unveiled to it. It knows what it knows because *it has seen it*, which carries a degree of certainty that surpasses that of any reflective deduction.

> Sectarian groups. Children of God
>
> As I sat there listening to him, the loud music and crowd seemed to fade into the atmosphere. The only thing I heard was his voice, the only thing I felt was that strength growing inside me right there in the middle of the nightclub, and for the first time in 25 years, I found the Truth! (22).

A particularly favorable climate for the production of revelatory experiences arises in those groups that hold the belief that they and they alone are the one and only true custodians of revelation.

> Sectarian groups. Jehovah's Witnesses
>
> The mysteries contained in the book of Revelation have long perplexed sincere students of the Bible. In God's due time those secrets would be made known, but how, when, and to whom? Only the spirit of God could make the meaning known as the appointed time drew near. (Revelation 1:3) Those sacred secrets would be revealed to God's zealous slaves on Earth...[that is, to Jehovah's Witnesses] (4).

Revelations occur in three distinct ways.

Apparitions

A being (almost always from beyond the grave) makes itself visible and makes the PPI privy to certain knowledge. Clinically, hallucinatory experiences of this type are common only in patients with mystical delusions, while in other delusional disorders they are associated only with acute decompensations. In contrast, in the universe of crisis cults and sectarian movements, and especially among leaders, they constitute an extraordinarily common experience.

The visual and auditory hallucinations of PIs differ from those of schizophrenics in that the latter tend to be exclusively auditory and located "in the internal field," whereas the apparitions of PIs are situated in front of the individuals themselves and in "external space." There is likewise a difference in the content of what is heard, so that while the voices of schizophrenics insult or give orders, the apparitions of PIs are associated with the transmission of a great message, of a truth.

Inspirations

The PPI notices that a certain thought, reflection, or mental image that comes to them at a given moment is not, in reality, a product of their own mind, but has been*transmitted*by another being. It may also take the form of a dream.

In Pentecostalism (followed by tens of millions of people), prophetic inspirations constitute an everyday experience. When these do not occur and transcendent decisions must be made or doctrinal doubts resolved, the leaders of congregations may*force*their prophetic gift through prayer and fasting, practiced intensively over several days, and receive divine inspirations that guide them as to how to act or that shed light on the correct interpretation

of the Bible (the ancient Plains Indians also isolated themselves in solitary places and fasted—and mortified themselves—so that a spirit in animal form would appear to them and reveal the making of a medicine bag, or a song, or the image they should paint on their tipi…).

It is also through divine inspiration that*glossolalia*, or the gift of tongues, occurs, which allows some Pentecostalists to speak in unknown languages (presumed to be dead languages) while others possess the gift of being able to translate their vocalizations. The task of inspiration, in this case, is shared between a receiver and an interpreter.

Illumination

> Cult groups. Moonies
>
> After several days of prayer, I received what I supposed was a 'sign'. Unable to concentrate on my student tasks, I was sitting on the edge of my bed. I leaned over to pick up one of my philosophy books and, upon opening it at random, I read a paragraph that said that history passes through certain cycles that help human beings in their evolution toward a higher plane. At that moment, I believed I had had a spiritual experience. How was it possible that I had opened the book precisely where this paragraph was? I thought that God was telling me to pay attention to Mr. Miller's lectures. I felt that I should go back and learn more about that movement (28).

The content of the truth may not have been stated by any apparition, nor placed in the mind of the IPP by any superior being. In this last quote, the adept "sees" for himself that a certain circumstance is not the result of chance but of divine intervention.

For some reason that has nothing to do with the strength of the arguments, *something* causes the IPP to attribute to its occurrence a burden of unquestionable veracity. Normally that *something* is an intense emotional reaction, of a euphoric or ecstatic type.

> Sokagakkai
>
> Yamamoto suddenly felt that this ceremony was different from all the others in which he had participated. Something radiant seemed to arise in his mind. And then he knew what it was about: it was the illumination before the truth that the Lotus Sutra itself teaches a person how to be a good fighter (32).

Later, in the chapter on hierarchy in the PCGs, we will return once again to the question of revelation, given the intimate relationship that exists between it and leadership. In this section I intend no more than to underline that revelation, in its various modalities, fosters the paranoid conviction of being in possession of the truth.

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