

El grupo paranoide

Chapter 12

Superiority

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Pride

Persecuted-persecutors.

"These alienated individuals are, in general, very proud; it is one of the dominant notes of their character" (59).

Victims.

"[...] it is associated with numerous undesirable personality traits such as narcissism" (12).

Paranoid character.

"[...] the essential traits of the paranoid character are the following:

- overestimation of oneself;
- distrust;
- falseness of judgment..." (48).

An *overestimation* that manifests itself both in imaginings...

Paranoid personality

"They may display unrealistic and barely concealed grandiosity fantasies..." (2).

Paranoia

"[...] with building richly colored castles in the air, while the patient's person plays the role of hero" (44).

(...) as in authentic convictions.

Paranoid character. Clinical case

"In general, he sees himself as more beautiful and better than nature made him, seeing the world as uglier and more evil than it really is" (29).

The paranoid relationship. Tizón.

"The body, as a theater of narcissism, can then become the center of intense exhibitionistic interests and of practices such as *vigorexia* and *body-building*" (74).

We already know that the traditional diagnosis of the *paranoid constitution* was grounded in a triad, one of whose three elements was pride. We have also noted how this component of the triad would lose

importance over the course of time, for clinicians, in favor of distrust. However, pride is an essential element of the paranoid personality and it is indispensable to dwell upon it.

Paranoid personality

"[...] predisposition to feeling excessively important..." (55).

In the same vein, psychometric approaches lead us to think that the individual with paranoid personality traits...

Factor QIV of the 16PF test

"[...] considers himself superior..." (43).

Just as paranoid individuals, human groups can also consider themselves greater and more important than they really are.

Turkish nationalism.

"For the most prominent of the theorists of Turkish nationalism, Ziya Gökalp, in fact: The country of the Turks is not Turkey, nor is it Turkestan. Their country is a vast and eternal land: Turan... A term that could also encompass Sumerians and Hittites, not to mention Attila, Genghis Khan and Tamerlane as 'manifestations of the protean genius of Turan'" (71).

Turkish nationalism.

"However, later the Turks ceased to be 'Turanians'. For Tekin Alp, in the 1930s, they had become tall and beautiful specimens of the 'Aryan race' [a race, let us remember, "superior" to the others] in line with the new interests aroused by racial and fascist doctrines" (71).

The *superiority complex* of the PI manifests itself with excess in grandiose-type delusional disorders, in which the patient attributes to himself an importance that he clearly lacks.

Without needing to reach the grotesque extremes of grandiosity delusions, pride is also present, more covertly, in the content of many persecutory delusions, as Kraepelin very acutely showed us. And it can even manifest itself in hypochondriac delusions.

Paranoid character. Clinical case

"One can also see how pride pricks up its ears even in hypochondriac manifestations when Rousseau speaks of his hernia, which worries him too much: he is persuaded that this common illness has not been properly clarified by anyone and that his own case could be very useful to medicine" (29).

The classic clinical descriptions of paranoia also present pride as a characteristic of the "prior personality" of paranoiacs.

Persecutors-persecuted.

"[...] holding a high opinion of their own person..." (26).

Delusion of grievance

"Driven by a senseless vanity..." (69).

Delusion of grievance. Case Aub

"[...] excessive pride ..." (69).

Paranoia. Clinical case. The master painter N.

"Outwardly he is a proud man [...]" (46).

Erotomania.

"The components of the feeling that generates the postulate are Pride, Desire and Hope" (13).

If the paranoid-paranoiac suffers from a superiority complex that expresses itself in the favorable opinions he holds of himself, the adept of the paranoid contagion group may experience that same sense of superiority, moreover, in relation to the group as such and in relation to its leader. This will be discussed in the pages that follow.

Before beginning, however, it is worth not overlooking a small nuance.

Paranoiac character.

"And yet this exaltation of the self is often concealed beneath a humility, sincere or feigned, always superficial, which confuses the layman but which must not deceive the psychologist" (29).

It may be added that this concealment of reality will be particularly common in those groups (such as the majority of religious cults) in which humility constitutes a valued and recommended attitude, and in which arrogance is censured.

The protagonists of superiority

Group superiority

Small sectarian groups tend to overestimate their virtues and, at least in their field of interest, consider themselves the best

Sectarian groups. El Patriarca.

"We currently have 70 centers, which are the most advanced in Europe" (24).

On other occasions, the extraordinary nature of the AP is broader, verging on megalomaniacal delusion.

Sokagakkai

"In the seven centuries that have elapsed since that time, no organization like ours has appeared on the face of the earth. We can be proud" (39).

This feeling of superiority can extend to the "expanded we" of all those whom the group, on occasion, claims to encompass or represent: the nation, the tribe...

Crisis cults. Smohalla (19th century).

"Smohalla professed a complex anthropology, manifestly influenced by Mormonism, according to which Indians were the Creator's first work; then came the French, the *Boston men* (the 'Americans' in Chinook jargon), the *King George Men* (the English) and lastly the Blacks and the Chinese" (47).

Superiority can be grounded in arguments of all kinds.

German Nationalism

"This attitude rejected Christianity in favor of a pantheistic sense of the cosmos and nature, to which were attributed the creation of special conditions and a unique human potential, and it was even supposed that the German landscape itself produced superior cultural characteristics" (58).

It can be expressed in pompous language.

Spanish Nationalism

"Martínez Torres delivered a speech in which he said:

'... the portrait of Letamendi, painted by me, represents more than science and more than art: because it represents science and art placed at the service of the Homeland. Upon that canvas I see the red and yellow colors of our sacred flag; the inextinguishable glories of our Spain. Hail immortal Spain! land that sustains so many marvels; engenderer of singular geniuses;

emporium of wealth in every corner of the earth; divine sky that illuminates such greatness; the admiration of the world..." (11).

And, finally, group pride is a sentiment that must be instilled at all costs.

Nazism

"No effort should be spared so that the feeling of belonging to a race develops in our people as it developed among the Romans in the times of their greatness" (35).

Esprit d'élite

The GCP grants an *esprit d'élite* that falls individually upon each one of its members.

Italian Fascism.

"Mussolini called the party members the new elite of Italy, a new special class that had emerged 'from the people' and above all from the countryside, to guide the revitalization and expansion of the nation" (58).

Italian Fascism.

"The objective of metaphysical idealism and vitalism was the creation of a new man, a new style of culture that would achieve excellence in both the physical and the artistic, and that would value courage, audacity, and the surpassing of previously established limits in the development of a new superior culture that would encompass the total man" (58).

A few lines above we noted that the adept is granted the privilege of feeling superior insofar as he belongs to a superior group, but that is not all; membership also makes *him* in particular, considered individually, a being superior to others.

Nationalism.

"Just as the mass armies of the early modern era proletarianized the infantry soldier, the revolutionary armies of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries 'ennobled' him. He was given the opportunity to attain glory; he was given an 'honor' to defend; and he was given emblems that in their day belonged only to those of noble birth; the flag, for example, which came to symbolize the entire population rather than the dynasty. According to Vagts, 'the tricolor satisfied sentiments that previously only the nobility had enjoyed. In short. The entire nation had become nobility'" (22).

Sokagakkai

"The realization of our goal of *kosen-rufu* is not something you do because you have been asked to do it. You must do it because you realize that you are the Bodhisattvas of the Earth..." (40).

In Buddhism Mahayana, the bodhisattvas are those beings who have voluntarily renounced becoming Buddhas in order to continue reincarnating on Earth and in this way help those humans who are still trapped in the wheel of reincarnations to cease suffering. The bodhisattvas are pre-divine beings.

Returning to the clinical realm, there is a delusional content that carries an *esprit d'élite* in some ways similar to that induced by paranoid contagion groups. I am referring to *delusions of filiation*, in which the feeling of pride stems from the fact (imagined and believed, yet false) of belonging to some great family or of having been sired by some notable figure.

Delusion of interpretation

"An illegitimate child sets forth the proof of belonging to so great a family" (69).

Paranoia

"After several years of vague speculations, there often appears suddenly in the patient's mind the triumphant presentiment that he is not the true son of his parents but of a higher and nobler cradle" (44).

It is no coincidence that some authors have conceptualized nationalism as, if not a *delusion of filiation*, then at least a kind of *illusion of filiation* to a lineage of noble warriors.

Nationalism.

"In other words, the nation is a warrior lineage that makes room for everyone. Through the democratization of glory, every citizen is encouraged to consider themselves a member of a noble lineage. 'The French' replaced the Bourbons. And just as every noble lineage had its coat of arms, every nation has its flag. The exaltation felt by the patriotic citizen upon contemplating their flag derives to some extent from the pride inspired by their belonging to an imaginary lineage..." (22).

The delusions or beliefs of being the reincarnation of this or that figure respond to the same elitist dynamic as those of filiation, but the pride, in this case, does not derive from belonging to a great lineage, but from having been who one has been.

Nazism

"Himmler considered himself to be the reincarnation of Henry I, Duke of Saxony, who in the year 919 became king and laid the foundations for the creation of the First German Reich" (76).

Cult groups. Reverend Jones's People's Temple.

"He claimed to be the reincarnation of Lenin, of Christ, or of Buddha, depending on the inspiration of the moment" (45).

Messianic movements. The *khlysty* (17th century).

"The term *khlysty* itself has a double meaning. It is inspired by the verb *khlystat*, 'to flagellate,' but it also means 'Christ' in the plural. According to the doctrine of the *khlysty*, Jesus periodically reincarnates in the bodies of numerous people. The new flagellants, men of God, believe that several living Christs exist within their midst" (6).

Cult groups. The Davidians.

"Other former members of David Koresh's commune have a very different view of this frustrated guitarist who considers himself the reincarnation of Jesus Christ..." (66).

I came to know the case of a small cult group in which each of its members believed themselves to be, and was taken to be, the reincarnation of one of the twelve apostles. The Virgin Mary had also been reincarnated in the person of a female follower...

Divinization of the leader

Paranoia. Ivan the Terrible.

"Historians have described in detail Ivan the Terrible, who ruled Russia in the seventeenth century. Even in adolescence, his extraordinary characteristics were boundless suspiciousness, insatiable cruelty, and extreme depravity. Subsequently, his choleric outbursts exceeded all bounds of reality, and everyone near him was outraged or threatened. Nevertheless, he considered himself a devout believer and arrogated to himself the role of 'avenging servant' who was to strike down all those who sinned against God. During his reign he killed thousands of people, including his son and heir and probably some of his five wives. After these fits of rage, he would spend entire days in prayer. His conviction that treachery was widespread frequently gave rise to periods of political terror. As his sense of being surrounded by disloyalty grew, he insisted on ever greater submission to his authority, and even his closest advisors were accused and executed. Seventeen years after his wife's death, Ivan accused his friends of having murdered her and threatened them with reprisals. Every adversity became

treachery. Kosdlov described how Ivan's paranoid grandiosity increased in parallel with the passing of the years. In the end he believed himself so singular before God that he thought he would attain an immortality not granted to other men" (72).

The dynamic of the divinization of the leader is one that tends to attribute unique powers and extraordinary qualities to the group's leader, placing him far above the rest of mortals.

Nazism

"Hitler, Himmler maintained, was the greatest man the world had ever known, even greater than Genghis Khan, the Mongol leader who in the thirteenth century conquered much of Europe and for whom Himmler felt great admiration" (76).

This is a tendency that, taken to the extreme, leads to his proclamation as God.

Messianic movements. Claas Epp (19th century).

"[...] he is, as he says, the son of Christ and the fourth person of the Trinity. He then establishes a new prayer: 'In the name of the Father, *of the* Sons and of the Holy Spirit" (6).

Cult groups. Sai Baba.

"For his numerous disciples, this Indian guru is none other than God and Christ united in a single body" (6).

Or to proclaim oneself someone *similar* to God.

Cult groups. Divine Church of Salvation.

"[...] they believe that God will manifest as an exact replica of Mr. Chen [the leader], distinguishable from his master only by a better sense of humor" (78).

The LP can also be placed *above* God, thus giving a curious additional twist of the screw.

Messianic movements. The Anointed Savior (15th century).

"Incredible as it may seem, the messiah we are about to present now considers himself superior to God himself.

According to his iconoclastic doctrine, God regularly calls upon him to cure him of the sins of men" (6)

Humbly, it is far more common for LPs to settle for the rank of Messiah or prophet.

Messianic movements. Abu Issa (8th century).

"Abu Issa does not take long to cross the final barrier and very soon declares himself the awaited Messiah. However, unlike other Jewish messiahs, who remain within the strict sphere of Judaism, Abu Issa invents a new syncretic religion broadly inspired by Islam. He claims to have been with Jesus and Muhammad in the heavens. The conversation must have proved fruitful, since our man lays claim to the legacy of both masters. Asserting a universal stature, he recognizes Christ and the Prophet as two divine messengers, two forerunners of Abu Issa" (6).

For atheists and agnostics, clever divine-*like* formulas are available.

Leninism. Shining Path.

"... The slogans... described him as the greatest living Marxist. But then that was not enough and he was called the greatest product of living matter" (30).

When it is not in a god or a messiah, GCPs can transform their leader into a monarch, heir to a unique line of succession tracing back to an already deceased founder. In the more occultist groups, and in the complete absence of historical evidence, this takes the form of a secret transmission. Paranoid thinking, which admits only the existence of *one* single truth, tends likewise to hold that only *one* person can interpret it correctly, that only *one* person can lead those who profess that truth, and that, ultimately, only *one* person can succeed the true leader when he dies. Insofar as this *monarchical propensity* of the GCP persists, succession conflicts can only end with the complete triumph of one of the contenders for leadership, or with the split into several new groups, each led by their respective "authentic successors."

In the Leninist movement, the line of succession of the *true truth* bifurcated on at least two major occasions: with the confrontation between Trotsky and Stalin, and at the moment of Mao's break with the Soviet Union of Khrushchev.

Maoist Leninism

"Comrade Mao Tse-tung is the greatest Marxist-Leninist of our era. He has inherited, defended, and developed in a brilliant and creative manner, and in all its aspects, Marxism-Leninism, raising it to a completely new stage" (Lin Piao, preface to the first edition of 52).

Following the abandonment of Leninist orthodoxy by the People's Republic of China, others would take up the torch.

Leninism. Shining Path.

"... whom his followers have no qualms in describing as 'leader and guide of the revolution in Peru, continuator of the work of Marx, Lenin, and Mao, the greatest living Marxist on earth'" (14).

In reality, the glorification of the leader is nothing but the reflection of a drift already evident in megalomaniac paranoia and related disorders.

Reformers

"Do the idealists of justice have any exaggeration of personality? At the beginning of their existence, certainly not, but as their idealism becomes systematized, grows, becomes more exclusive, from the moment when Equity seems to identify itself with their own conception of equity, and when they begin to admit that they symbolize justice, their personality takes a parallel development" (19).

Reformers. Case Eduardo V.

"[...] he considered himself a true prophet; his writings were signed simply as *the man*, thus alluding to a complete human incarnation" (19).

The self-divinization of the IP implies that through a slow process of biased interpretations and reasoning, a distorted opinion of oneself is forged in the direction of megalomania. Now then, what in the IP is a strictly individual development, in the PCG is a gregarious process. The collective opinion that the group holds about its leader lists slowly and imperceptibly in the direction of his glorification. In this drift, both public comments and, perhaps more so, private comments and rumors play an essential role.

Sectarian groups. TFP

"Plinio is catalogued as 'the greatest saint of all time' (62).

In this process, the leader always plays a crucial role, being complicit in fostering his grandiose transformation, both through what he says and through what he does not deny.

Reformers. Robespierre.

"Only or almost only I do not let myself be corrupted, only or almost only I do not compromise with justice, and these two superior merits I possess both together in the supreme degree (Speech to the Constituent Assembly)"(19).

But the followers as well, especially the members of the inner circle that usually surrounds LP figures, play an active and even leading role in the deification of their leader.

Leninist-sectarian groupuscule. SLA

"According to her [Fahizah] he was not a god, but he was 'the hope instilled and the spirit of his people and of all peoples... a prophet and a leader... who is capable of helping the people to understand gentleness and strength'" (33).

Leninist-sectarian groupuscule. SLA

"One night, as we had gathered for a meeting in the back room, Cin solemnly announced that he had an important message for all of us. This produced an immediate silence and complete attention. He raised his head, gazing at the ceiling, as if his thoughts were very far away, and then he looked at each of us one by one. 'Sit up straight!' he hissed reproachfully at Yolanda, who was lying on the floor without much elegance. She quickly assumed the correct position, with her legs crossed in front of her, her back straight, watching him attentively. He nodded. Then he paused again, as if deciding on a weighty problem. We sat on the floor in a circle, around a small candle that glowed in the darkened room. 'I truly am a prophet. I am here on earth to lead the people. I know that Fahizah has always believed it, but I did not truly know it until today...'

He continued in a mystical and soft tone of voice. He did not say that he was enlightened or instructed by God, and yet that was what he implied. I thought it was strange and beyond his usual strangeness" (33).

Other leaders do not take as long to accept the glorifying proposals coming from their followers.

Anabaptist messianism. John of Leiden (16th century).

"It must be said that the libertine Anabaptist is occupied with another matter, for in September 1534 a goldsmith named Dusentschur has a vision. The Heavenly Father celebrates with him that the master of Münster is none other than... the messiah. Bockelson [John of Leiden] accepts the title without needing to be asked twice. He is now a descendant of David and king of the world" (6).

When the exaltation of the leader continues *post mortem* it is evident that it can only be the followers who keep driving it forward.

Soviet Leninism

"As early as 1925 the Politburo set up a laboratory specially devoted to studying Lenin's brain. The aim was to give the world proof that the great ideas had germinated in a spirit out of the ordinary, which was confirmed by their intrinsic value and their absolute truth [...] 'the brain of V. I. Lenin demonstrated an extraordinarily high level of organization'" (77).

The dynamics of the leader's divinization have an emotional component, far less evident but extraordinarily intense. It is futile to attempt to determine whether the followers experience certain emotions toward their leader because they see him as a divine or pre-divine being, or whether the divinizing cognitive distortion is the result of the intense emotions experienced.

Sokagakkai

"On the contrary, Ikeda [the President of the Sokagakkai] is without doubt idolized and probably deified by some of the Gakkai's members. The awe and reverence in the voices of believers when they speak of him is striking; the rapture with which they listen to someone describing a conversation with him is intimidating. At large gatherings, seeing him moves many to tears. His interpretations of scripture and his teachings on guidance are equated with the works of Nichiren himself as repositories of truth" (79).

There are occasions when it is the leader himself who must put a stop to the divinizing impulse of his followers.

Nazism

"There are enthusiasts who are not yet able to explain the rapid rise of the German people and who feel the need to deify me, to make of me a prophet, a new Mohammed, a second Messiah. Well, let them know that this role does not suit me at all. I do not have the soul of a prophet, nor that of a Messiah" (35).

Sokagakkai

"During his tenure as head of the Soka Gakkai, President Ikeda enjoyed great charisma and such appeal that he was compelled to issue a denial of his Buddhahood. He said, 'Can one think of a person like me... as a living God or the incarnation of Buddha? It is pure nonsense... I beg you not to do so. The Gohonzon is the only thing you should venerate'" (38).

Wherever the distorted opinions originate, the members of the paranoid contagion group act as a sounding board for them, which, for those immersed in the group's atmosphere, lends credibility to the absurd beliefs.

Sokagakkai

"Our promise to President Josei Toda:

"The expectations that Josei Toda, great master of shakubuku in the Last Days of the Law and one of the most eminent philosophers in the world, has placed in us, fill us with deep emotion'" (39).

Sokagakkai

"Young people standing before the master who leads the century! ..." (39).

For their part, for the adept, the fact of being a follower of this incomparable being represents the possibility of appropriating, in a certain way, the superior nature of their leader, and of despising or feeling compassion for those who cannot share with them the privilege they enjoy. It must be borne in mind that the adept feels a false yet profound sense of union and communication with their leader — as will be discussed later — and therefore experiences the deification of that leader as something very close to them.

Sacralizations

The superiority complex can refer to *things* as much as to people, basically those things that the PGI considers its own.

Nazism

"We had barely finished with the first great assembly that took place on February 24, 1920, in the Hofbrachausfestsaal, in Munich, when we were already making preparations for a new one... the hall had for us, the National Socialists, an almost sacred significance" (36).

The things the group does can also acquire a sacred character.

Sokagakkai

"3. We, the members of the Suiko-kai, aware that we are the vanguard of the Soka Gakkai and the indispensable disciples and messengers of Mr. Toda, swear to exert our utmost effort to achieve the mission of this organization, no matter how much the times may change and no matter how far this sacred struggle may take us" (39).

But now we refer solely to belongings. Sacralization is carried out most often upon three of them: territories, texts, and doctrines.

Sacralization of territories

The sacralization process affects, above all, the group's spaces, regardless of whether these consist of vast expanses of land (in nationalism) or a network of apartments scattered across various cities (in sectarian groups).

Sokagakkai

"Nikko Shonin, the second Supreme Prelate of Nichiren Shoshu, chose the beautiful land of Oishigahara, on the slopes of Mount Fuji, six hundred and eighty-two years ago to be the seat of our main temple and the point from which our movement was to begin spreading true Buddhism. On October 1st, 1972, our long-cherished dreams of a new building for the main temple were realized with the completion of the magnificent Sho-Hondo, whose importance is heightened by its location in that sacred place" (40).

Messianic movements. Jacobina Mentz (19th century).

"Meanwhile, Jacobina and her disciples build a fortified temple, in which they entrench themselves to found a holy city. But in 1873 the army attacks and carries out a true massacre" (6).

Sectarian groups. TFP

"The headquarters are considered the home of the Virgin, they are inhabited by angels and filled with graces" (62).

It must be emphasized that even when no religious ideology exists, and therefore that *divine touch* cannot descend, territories can be endowed with a mystical air or one that, in any case, escapes the reach of rational understanding.

Nazism

"It can be said that the blood of a people penetrates its roots very deeply into the homeland's soil through its peasant estates, from which it continuously receives that life-giving force that constitutes its special character" (Speech by Walter Darré cited in 34).

Sacralization of texts

Many paranoid contagion groups possess sacralized texts. These are characterized by the fact that in them (and not in others) is contained *the* truth. They are immutable, irreplaceable, and worthy of the utmost respect. The sacralized text is given a dimension that it lacks.

Sectarian groups. TFP

"Because the masterful essay by Plinio Correa de Oliveira —distinguished son of the Church in the New World— is a golden link connecting two Christendoms: the one that arose from the Ibero-American evangelizing epic and the one that will emerge from the feat of the Counter-Revolution, to shine universally in the Third Millennium of the Christian era: the Kingdom of Mary, promised by Our Lady at Fatima" (17).

Soviet Leninism

"For many years this writing [The State and Revolution], of no more than one hundred and twenty pages, was considered a masterpiece. In the USSR it was published in more than seven million copies and in forty-seven languages, while it was a *best-seller* among foreign communist parties. The editors of volume 33 of the *Complete Works* stated: 'This work, in which the teachings of Marxism on the total State are expounded for the first time fully and systematically, represents the scientific clarification of the theory of the State, which remains relevant for its depth and richness'" (77).

A curious activity of paranoid contagion groups is that of recording without interruption the words of their leaders, which automatically transform into a kind of revealed truth.

Maoist Leninism

"One night, while chatting with Luo Ruiqing and with other members of the staff, Yang Shankun said that a way had to be found to preserve the Chairman's ideas. Mao always dealt with policy matters when visiting the provinces, but since the Central Secretariat had no record of the Chairman's words, it could not convert them into written instructions. Local officials faced the same problem: they could relay Mao's comments to their superiors — to Liu Shaoqi and to Deng Xiaping— but since they were not officially recorded, no one wanted to take responsibility for converting that local information into the basis of a policy measure. "A way must be found to record the Chairman's words and send them in writing to the Central Secretariat so that they may serve as a reference in the future," said Shankun. It was a very farsighted idea on the part of a subordinate who was grateful" (20).

This is a relatively common practice in cult groups.

Sacralization of doctrines

The following two quotations are an example of an equally interesting aspect: the sacralization of doctrines, closely linked to the sacralization of texts and to that of the leader's words.

Sokagakkai

"We know that the religion and philosophy to which we devote ourselves are the most magnificent in the universe" (39).

Cult groups. The Patriarch

"At a time when the specters of intolerance, antisemitism, and xenophobia are rising across all of Europe, at a time when the 'syndrome of indifference' is at its strongest, to the point of

rejecting those who do not share the same skin color, who belong to another religion — this enemy to be fought who commits the offense of 'thinking' differently — it is for this reason that the message of our community is the most important" (10).

It must be made clear that one's own is the first in the *ranking* of doctrines. If necessary, and to dispel any doubts, the paranoid contagion group specifies which doctrines are inferior to its own.

Sokagakkai

"Christianity is superficial, but I do not reject it entirely. I myself was a Christian, and I know what I am talking about. Although it surpasses many primitive religions, Christianity is inferior to the teachings of Nichiren Daishonin" (39).

Sacralization of objects

Cult groups. TFP

"The ritual garments of the TFP —the cape, the lion, the habit...— are bestowed in a solemn ceremony. They are never mixed with profane objects. When they must be discarded, they are burned or buried" (62).

Paranoid contempt

Nature fanatics. Clinical case.

"Some men of our time fully realize the [natural] life dreamed of by Rousseau: they are unstable wanderers, incapable of settling in any one place, and who, hating society with its obligations and its laws, travel Europe on foot in search of the only intense sensations they know: those provided by vast open spaces and nature outside the cities.

[...] to become aware of this, one need only read the text that he himself sent us and from which we extract some particularly typical passages:

'Society is made up of nothing but egoists, cowards, the ambitious, schemers, and braggarts'.

'The ambitious are people driven by vanity who want to appear more than they are, who spend money to socialize, to obtain some decoration or other'.

'If they have beautiful and bold wives, they want to show them off in the salons of some well-placed figure and, if need be, they turn a blind eye to adultery'.

'As for the egoists and the braggarts, here is how I see them: one day, when a theater began to burn, an individual brutally struck several women to make his way through and thus managed to save himself'. The next day, wanting to excuse himself for his cowardice, he made the

following claim in a countess's salon: 'Yes, madam, thanks to my courage and my composure several people were saved and I can boast of having snatched them from the flames at risk to my own life'.

'Cowards bow before the nobility, play the role of lackeys, failing to understand what is vile and shameful in emptying the chamber pots of these gentlemen'.

'The clergy are the most execrable race I know; they always use the name of God to obtain money'.

[...] 'Kings are felons capable of selling out the nation, like that Louis XVI whom the energetic men of the era, fortunately, sent to the scaffold'.

'The word homeland was created to send nations to war against one another, to provide an outlet for the capital of shareholders'.

'Society has laws, but they often deceive or are deceived'.

'Justice is different depending on the class of society to which the accused belongs: a poor boy will be condemned to fifteen days in jail for begging, while an infanticidal mother will be set free under the pretext of her great repentance, but in reality because she belongs to a prominent family.'

[...] 'Under these conditions, it is better to abandon a society in which there are so many vices, so many failings, to become a vagabond, to be free.'

'I can very well conceive of an ideal society, but it will never come to pass. Nevertheless, it is sometimes pleasant to immerse oneself in the illusion that there will be no more abuses of power, no injustice, that justice will be equal for all.'

'This ideal equality is realized among vagabonds; they consider themselves all equal" (19).

Italian Fascism.

"Anti-bourgeois. Fascist leadership comes from a variety of groups: intellectuals, former soldiers, failed businessmen and professionals, who habitually despise the routine, stable, and antiheroic lives of the established middle class" (8).

Erotomania.

"A patient of Esquirol is enamored of a man of high standing whom she has only caught a glimpse of; she writes frequent letters, verses, copies them several times with great care. 'But if these writings express the most vehement passion, they are proof of the most virtuous feelings. When Mrs. X... goes out for a walk, she moves with vivacity, distracted like a preoccupied person, or else her gait is slow and haughty; she avoids encounters with men whom she despises and whom she places far below her idol" (19).

En the framework of the "superiority complex," pride is inextricably bound to contempt. Both are two sides of the same coin, although the second –contempt– tends to conceal itself to a far greater degree than the first. Though not enough to go unnoticed by clinical observation.

Paranoid personality

"Also frequently, they despise people who are regarded as weak, soft, sick, or who have some defect" (1).

Factor QIV of the 16PF test

"Cannot tolerate human weaknesses" (43).

But beyond merely being unable to tolerate them, paranoid thinking tends to make a negative evaluation (of others) that leads it to see in everyone such weaknesses and frailties.

Victimists.

"[...] other recent studies indicate that victimism [...] attribution to others of negative qualities" ().

Nazism

"Once the war has ended, and when therefore military concerns are less absorbing for me, I will dedicate myself very particularly to developing in our youth that type of man, alert, intelligent, resolute, in the style of that young corporal. In that way, to the types of men of other races, who are generally weak beings, when not completely brutish, I will oppose men..." (35).

Sectarian groups. Hermetic Philosophical Institute

"In reality the average (mediocre) man is nothing more than the faithful copy of his sole model and, in accordance with it, he indefinitely repeats his behavior.

There is nothing of value in vulgarity; only imitation, absence of creativity, lack of critical sense and lack of will" (4).

The defects with which to justify contempt toward humans in general or some of them in particular are varied.

Paranoia. The Aimée Case

"On another occasion in E.'s office I spoke ill of her. Everyone agreed in declaring her to be authentic, distinguished... I protested saying that she was a whore. That is why she was coming after me" (48).

Sectarian groups. The Reverend Jones's People's Temple.

"We have found a way of life that nurtures trust and that could mean something for a society grown in cynicism and coldness" (45).

Sectarian groups. The Patriarch

"These Lords of Power know that our message goes beyond drugs, and thanks to that we will manage to combat and defeat it. A message that they will never be able to carry out because it would force them to renounce their selfishness..." (10).

In some cases the contempt is not expressed openly, but it is no less evident for that.

Sectarian Groups. Hermetic Philosophical Institute

"[...] I know that this book will be resisted by hypocrites" (4).

And therefore, whoever resists believing in its content...

Sectarian Groups. Hermetic Philosophical Institute

"When comparing the characteristics of the common subject with the capabilities that one who completes himself can have, an immeasurable abyss of differences opens up, which constitute, simply, the different qualities of a 'rough' man and a 'refined' one" (4).

Which ultimately means any ordinary man and an adept.

In other cases, the fewer, contempt is expressed frankly and even with open hostility.

J.O.N.S.

"[...] and tenaciously reaffirming our absolute disdain toward the persons and groups that raise outside of the J.O.N.S. the banner of national claim, with a reactionary and futile spirit" (50).

Nazism

"[...] The Jew is a bastard. He has hereditary factors from Aryans, Asians, Blacks and Mongols. In bastards, the bad predominates. The only good thing they have is their white color..." (Letter from a girl published in the weekly "Stürmer", January 1935, cited in 83)

But contempt is not directed solely at others. A paradox of paranoid behavior is the coexistence, in the same individual, of convictions and sensations of grandiosity with experiences of guilt and self-depreciation. References to one's own inadequacy or inferiority are intermingled with megalomaniacal references.

Delusion of grievance. The Aub Case

"And to think that it should be necessary that I, the poor ridiculed inventor, so many times scorned, robbed, slandered, defamed, bankrupted, ruined, condemned to prison for blackmail, I Pygmy, to think that it is I who has been chosen by fate for the noble task of suppressing Jules Ferry the calamity, of liberating France!" (69).

The induction of experiences of guilt and self-contempt is an almost universal phenomenon in groups known as cults. Cult leaders too combine within themselves extreme humility with megalomania.

Sokagakkai

"—Although I am not worthy of following in the footsteps of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi and of accepting the presidency of this organization, thanks to the enlightenment I experienced while in prison, I have decided to face this responsibility... Unworthy as I know I am, I have resolved to accept this position, nonetheless, and to dedicate my life to the Gohonzon and to unwavering faith in Nichiren Daishonin" (39).

The three planes of the superiority complex

Cognitive plane: the arguments

The IGP suffers an apparent loss of common sense that leads him to accept implausible and little or not at all justified arguments, as long as they serve his own glorification.

It was Gobineau the first to systematically expound the theory, absurd and without scientific basis, that some races are "superior" to others. He sought to assert that nobles, like himself, despite having fallen from grace after the French Revolution, remained above the commoners insofar as they descended directly from the Germanic invaders, a superior race. But this ridiculous and marginal idea — that of Germanic racial superiority — would be seized upon some decades later by certain nationalisms (above all the German one) to ground the superiority of their respective peoples in racial criteria. It is nothing short of surprising the success that ideas as fallacious as racist ones, rejected by the scientific community, managed to achieve.

It was probably nationalist exaltation that created the fertile ground for the ideology of racial superiority to take such firm root in Germany and. The adoption of racist ideas was not the cause of the collective madness into which Germany plunged; it was its consequence. The racist arguments were those that, at that historical and cultural moment, were most readily at hand and proved most useful for justifying and providing moral cover for the satisfaction of the tendency to identify and sacrifice scapegoats. A tendency that arises from collective paranoidization.

Nationalism.

"The myth of white superiority was also invoked, at a time when anthropology and ethnology began to emerge as specialized branches within the social sciences, whose initial occupation was the study of the newly discovered 'primitive peoples'" (57).

Nationalism.

"Very soon it was 'discovered' that the aptitudes that made some nations strong and powerful derived from congenital and biological traits. It was racial characteristics — physical and intellectual traits — that established the existence of superior and inferior races.

Throughout Europe these conceptions enjoyed enormous success. The French aristocrat Arthur de Gobineau, in his *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*, published as early as the mid-century, had already established the general theory of the inequality of the different races, while positioning the Germanic race as the superior race par excellence. It was the birth of one of the most important myths of the first half of the twentieth century: the myth of the superiority of the Aryan race, which in Germany and Austria began to find its apologists in the Austrian Georg von Schönerer and the Germans Adolf Stöcker and Adolf Wagner. But in England, Sir John Seeley also established in his book *The Expansion of England* (1883) the principle according to which the British Empire had been the fruit of the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race" (57).

English nationalism.

"Well then, this man [Disraeli, Prime Minister to Her Majesty the Queen of England], apparently uninfluenced by his Jewish ancestry, is a typical example of a racism that constantly insists on the idea of the superiority of the English race; on occasion he refers to an aristocracy of nature" (80).

Virtues

However, the usual thing is that, rather than openly asserting themselves as *superior*, paranoid contagion groups merely attribute to themselves specific virtues that, in the end, make them better than others. The

superiority of the paranoid contagion group is not explicitly asserted but is inferred from the possession of such virtues.

Paranoia

"The patient considers himself particularly gifted, a genius, an important poet, composer, discoverer, scholar [and, consequently...] attaches great importance to his person, and feels called to occupy an important position in the world" (44).

Sokagakkai

"Although they got lost in conversation, both were intelligent, vigorous, well-grounded and sincere, as every young member of Soka Gakkai should be" (39).

Paranoia

"Patients consider themselves remarkably qualified and honest..." (44).

Cult groups. Hermetic Philosophical Institute

"If we make the decision to bring a child into this world, we must take full responsibility for this fact, understanding what our action truly involves.

It is undeniable, however, that this requires a self-discipline that only a select few possess" (4).

In this way the IP and the GCP can see themselves as unique, distinct and extraordinary (that is, superior) without needing to say so openly, which would clash with the rejection that most ethical codes impose on vanity and contempt for others.

The great virtues are placed on the intellectual, psychological and moral planes.

Cult groups. Scientology.

"The book began with an impressive array of charts suggesting increases in IQ and an improvement of personality through Dianetics, which appeared to have been widely demonstrated" (3).

Sectarian groups. *Church of Bible Understanding*.

"They believed that their understanding of human nature was unparalleled, providing them with spiritual eyes with which to see into the consciences and thoughts of others" (25).

Sokagakkai

"Compassion (*jih*) is the basic spirit of shakubuku. Compassion means eliminating the suffering of others and helping them to be happy. You should try to practice shakubuku as an expression of your desire to relieve the suffering of humanity. This compassionate spirit will naturally emerge from your life when you chant abundant daimoku to the Gohonzon" (81).

And also in the bodily realm.

Crisis cults. Hau-hau (19th century).

"By taking part in these rites, Te Ua said, the adherents would become invulnerable to the bullets of the white man" (9).

Crisis cults. Keekhowei: ramkokamekra prophetess (20th century).

"Keekhowei authorized her adherents to freely kill livestock from neighboring farms for food, since, as she claimed, it belonged to Aukhe, and when the farmers tried to retaliate, the hero would make the Indians invulnerable to bullets" (68).

Other paranoid groups. Tata Dios.

"His warriors were anointed before battle with holy oils that were supposed to make their bodies invulnerable to bullets" (68).

On the other hand, there is the alternative of self-attributing ethereal virtues, less concrete ones, which are evaluated in an entirely subjective manner, and which consequently prove difficult to dispute.

German Nationalism

"The *Addresses to the German Nation*, which Fichte delivered in 1807-1808, are the first manifesto of German nationalism. Fichte will undoubtedly continue still being faithful, on the one hand, to the cosmopolitan ideal of the eighteenth century: he had trusted that revolutionary France would spread the ideas of progress throughout all of Europe, and Napoleon disappointed him. It will therefore be Germany, henceforth, that must be the pioneer of humanity, since France did not know how to be. France, indeed, has been corrupted by civilization, by an excess of logic, and by social conventions; Germany, on the contrary, has preserved in its purest state the primitive virtues; it is the 'original people' (Urvolk)" (18).

The imperative of being *the best* manifests itself in discourses that, in the eyes of the external observer, come across as comical and even grotesque.

Spanish Nationalism

"The science of the second half of the nineteenth century was not free from the nationalist spirit of the era. Spain was not the only country where the national hydrological wealth was championed and where the preference of 'upper-class' tourism for other European spas over domestic ones was criticized. French hegemony was as envied as it was criticized, as can be perceived in some of the conclusions of Pedro María Rubio: '1st That Spain does not recognize any other European nation as richer in mineral waters. 2nd That France is therefore not richer than the rest of the European continent, as is claimed. And 3rd That Spain, with a large surface area of 14,853 square leagues, has 232 more springs than France, which has a surface area of 17,280 square leagues'" (65).

The need to consider oneself superior and to invent virtues that justify that superiority must carry great force when megalomaniacal beliefs take hold against all evidence and against all logic. A patient whom I had occasion to treat had been admitted once, some 20 years earlier, when she was around 30, as a result of her delusion. What she remembered, with great conviction, of that hospitalization was that "they admitted me to run tests on me and the only thing that came out of it is that I reach further than other people, that I am too intelligent." The same underlying tendency lies beneath the various rationalizations.

Paranoia

"What is manifested, through the use of the category *ideal value*, is the feeling that one wishes to be judged as normal, or even superior or beyond any reproach: Paranoid patients refute the implication that their hospitalization reflects any stigma or failing [The article provides the following examples of this type of word: identity, successfully, famous]" (56).

Adversities such as psychiatric admission are, as if by magic, transformed into mere consequences of an excess of virtues. As are all other setbacks.

Erotomania.

"But these abnormal women have a very flattering opinion of themselves; by their own account they are capable of understanding the most difficult and complicated things; they find themselves out of place in the vulgar environment in which they move; they could have earned large sums and even fortunes, but their disinterestedness, their kindness, their altruism prevented it. In everyone they inspire trust, elevation of feeling, respect, and yet their beauty, their elegance, their charm do not go unnoticed anywhere; it is indeed because of the very excess of their qualities that those who pine for them, sometimes very wealthy men, dare not declare themselves" (19).

Messianism

Sokagakkai

"Certainly in the three thousand years of the history of Buddhism there has never been a gathering such as this of three thousand citizens of the United States who are now here at the foot of Mount Fuji. I declare before all humanity that this is an unprecedented event, a sublime page marking the glorious beginning of a brilliant history" (40).

Pride is justified by the messianic convictions so characteristic of cult groups and some IPs (we will deal specifically with messianism later; for now, we are only interested in it insofar as it serves as a support for the superiority complex). To the extent that one belongs to the group upon which the *salvation* of humanity depends, one has ample reasons to feel proud.

Sokagakkai

"Unlike other organizations, the NSA has not only set itself high goals, but is actually achieving the noblest objective: that of establishing an ideal society and of bringing happiness to each individual. No one, unless they participate in the activities of true Buddhism, can understand the truth of this declaration..." (81).

French nationalism.

"However, we have little indication that the French political and military class ever doubted its mission as the bearer of the most advanced form of civilization, which was to be brought, or imposed, upon less fortunate peoples" (82).

In other cases, the glorious future that is augured is not to be shared by humanity as a whole but is instead reserved for a particular people, as occurs in other nationalisms.

Nazism

"Of course, it is to the young that one must turn first for the repopulation of those eastern territories... It is necessary to instill in them the pride of settling in countries where they will find nothing ready-made but rather, quite the contrary, where they will have to create everything. It is also advisable to let them know that we are counting on them to build something very great..." (35).

There are "selective messianisms" in which the PCG offers itself as a solution to a specific problem, such as drug addiction. That said, megalomania leads the group to conceive of itself as *the* great solution, and not *a* further solution.

Cult groups. The Patriarch

"Little by little —his biography explains—, with that mixture of passion, understanding, intelligence and dynamism that form his strength, he establishes the foundations of what will later become the greatest alternative to drug addiction and AIDS: the 'El Patriarca Association'" (64).

Destiny

The superiority of paranoid contagion groups also resides in the important destiny for which they have been called.

Paranoia

"The conviction grows ever stronger that he was born to be 'someone out of the ordinary', not made 'like the masses'" (44).

Paranoia. The Aimée Case

"Governments forget the danger of war; no doubt it will be enough to remind them of it; she believes it is her destiny. But the people have been delivered to bad shepherds. She will then appeal to beneficent authorities, to the pretender to France, to the Prince of Wales, whom she will ask to go and deliver a great speech in Geneva" (48).

Very often, that destiny (that of the patient, the leader, or the group) has been decided by God.

Delusion of grievance

"This disinterested role he attributes to himself then gives him a loftier idea of his own personality; he believes himself to be an instrument of Providence..." (69).

Cult groups. Moonies.

"[...] let us listen to them sing at the hour of prayer:

Sun Myung Moon, we give you our life,

for we know that God has chosen you

to free our brothers from the chains of hell

and bring paradise upon all the earth" (7).

Nazism

"... we love Adolf Hitler, because we believe deeply and firmly that he has been sent by God to save Germany" (Goering, cited in 83).

American Nationalism

"A fanatical assertion of this myth was pronounced by Senator Albert Beveridge: 'God has not been preparing the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples for a thousand years to remain in vain and idle self-contemplation and self-admiration. No. He has made us the foremost organizers of the world, to establish order where chaos reigned; he has given us a progressive spirit to crush the reactionary forces throughout the Earth; he has given us the ability to govern so that we may administer the government of savage and senile peoples. Were it not for this strength of the Anglo-Saxons, the world would return to barbarism and darkness; and of all our race He has marked the American people as His chosen nation to bring about, at last, the redemption of the world'" (41).

Vanguard

Another of the recurring themes that explain superiority is vanguardism (from *vanguard*, those who go ahead, at the prow of humanity's progress). There is no shortage of quotations with which to illustrate it.

Sectarian groups. The commune of Otto Muehl.

"Children are raised in the belief that the traditional family is a horrible and obsolete phenomenon and that the commune is a vanguardist elite" (73).

Sokagakkai

"3. We, the warriors of the Male Youth Division, promise [...] and to be fully aware of our importance as the vanguard of society and irreplaceable disciples of President Toda" (39).

Leninism.

"For him, the party is the conscious and advanced layer of the working class, it is its vanguard" (21).

Vanguardism is also expressed through metaphors.

Nazism

"We observe this most clearly in the race that was and is the standard-bearer of human cultural progress: the Aryan" (36).

Nazism

"'We will be the heaven that, with the revolution, brings new life,' wrote Goebbels in 1923, and expressed, with these words, something that was not only in his mind, but in the minds of many of the young people of that time" (5).

Feats

We have seen how the IGP is superior by virtue of who it is, or what it is like, or what it possesses. Also by the things it does. Its activities are clothed in a sacred halo.

Nationalism.

"Between the 16th and 19th centuries, two 'military revolutions' took place in Europe; the first of these consisted basically of technical and organizational transformations — of weaponry, command structures, and the means of recruiting and supplying armies — while the second was closely related to the political revolutions of the late 18th century. The first of these revolutions reduced the importance of the common man to that of a minuscule precision component of the great machine of war, the bureaucratized army; the second revolution invested him with the kind of glory that had once been reserved for the warrior elite. [...]

Here we will concentrate on the parallel transformation of the passions of war, which were, in effect, spreading from the elite to the common foot soldier and ordinary citizen. In the new era, the sacralization of war came to depend less on established religions such as Christianity and more on the new 'religion' of nationalism" (22).

French nationalism.

"The personal experience of participation in the Napoleonic wars remains opaque to us, but it was undoubtedly very profound [...] One might think that for many, especially for the officers, the sense of making history more than made up for the troubles and discomforts" (82).

Warriors.

"Now, however much they may have engaged in roguish behavior, warrior elites have long attempted to turn war into something sacred and respectable. Encouraged in many cases by religious authorities, they took whatever they could from established religions, plundering them, so to speak, for glorious justifications and showy ceremonies [...] For the true member of the warrior elite, all war is sacred" (22).

The IGP enjoys dwelling on heroic images of itself.

Italian fascism.

"We are children of the patrols, of the assaults, of the most bloody and most destructive war, the first at the finish line of victory, the purest expression of valor. We were born in the furrow of the trench opened by the plow of victory. The 'Arditto' is a flourishing infantryman, a seed that becomes a plant, a common man elevated to the category of hero and who, tested in a thousand branching assaults, has yielded the most abundant fruits of sacrifice" (Ferruccio Vecchi, cited in 34).

Sectarian groups. TFP

"A question naturally rises to the reader's mind, having reached the end of this chronicle: what is, seen as a whole, the balance of this true *gesta Dei per contrarrevolucionarios* of universal scope, which is the epic of the TFPs?" (15).

Often the heroic deeds are set in a near future, for which the PCG prepares itself eagerly.

Sectarian groups. TFP

"The portentous men who will fight against the devil for the Kingdom of Mary, gloriously leading the struggle against the devil, the world, and the flesh until the end of time, are described by Saint Louis as magnificent models who invite those who, in the dark days of today, fight in the ranks of the Counter-Revolution to perfect enslavement to Our Lady" (17).

And not only do they dream of and prepare for the accomplishment of great heroic deeds in a future that, however imminent it may be, has not yet arrived, but they may already pass — now — to heroic action.

Sectarian-Leninist groupuscule. SLA

"For years he had read, studied, and debated and heard all kinds of revolutionary rhetoric. But only they, the SLA, had dared to move to action, to begin the revolution of which they were certain would one day triumph in the United States. They expected that victory would come within their own lifetimes" (33).

But the boldness of the SLA's actions was not solely the fruit of courage, but also of a perception of reality distorted by megalomania.

Sectarian-Leninist groupuscule. SLA

"Our next combat action was going to be the greatest, Cin announced, for we were going to advance the revolution by going out on 'search and destroy' missions to shoot and kill police officers. During the night we would move through the streets, ambushing police officers wherever we found them, on foot or in patrol cars. This would be true guerrilla warfare. We

would strike quickly with heavy weaponry and then disappear into the night. Early in the morning, each team would invade a civilian home, taking control of it the following day, sleeping and standing guard in turns, then setting out for another 'search and destroy' action under cover of darkness the following night.

At first, of course, people would resent the invasion of their homes, but they would soon learn that the SLA would never harm them. In the houses, Cin said, we would explain the revolution to the people and even attempt to recruit them" (33).

It must be remembered that the reckless symbiotic "army" barely counted a dozen soldiers.

In the absence of feats to take pride in, there is also the solution of inventing them, making use of paranoid thinking's great capacity to interpret reality as convenience dictates. Let us look at a feat that is not military, but intellectual:

Spanish nationalism.

"In this letter, Martínez de Torres lays claim to the 'concept of illness' for Spanish medicine and described its formulator, Letamendi, as an 'immortal genius,' 'the pride of Spain,' 'a singular Master,' and 'a sage among sages'" (11).

No less. And an example of an obstetric feat.

Folie à famille. Clinical case.

"Two weeks after discharge, MK's mother was admitted. Her mother had already been admitted 12 years earlier, having been diagnosed with 'religious mania'. However, she was not considered mentally ill. She had had no contact with psychiatric services in the last 12 years. On this admission, the mother claimed to have been pregnant for the last 10 years. She appeared to be experiencing an acute paranoid psychosis, and even without seeking any medical attention, she had firmly maintained her delusion for the last ten years. It is interesting that her six daughters and two sons all share her false beliefs and those of MK. After twelve days, the psychotic symptoms subsided somewhat, and she was discharged still holding her delusion of pregnancy. Seen at home, although apparently free of her psychotic symptoms, she still believed that one day she would appear in the *Guinness Book of Records* as a result of the duration of her pregnancy" (53).

The heroic deeds that the IGP attributes to itself have their reverse side in the contempt with which it regards the activities of others.

Cult groups. TFP

"Everything that does not involve participating in the TFP's struggle is considered 'worldly': pursuing a university degree, having friendships, going to the cinema" (62).

Divine touch

The superiority of the IGP may also be attributed to the fact that it has the good fortune of enjoying a privileged relationship with God.

Cult groups. Jehovah's Witnesses.

"Jehovah's Witnesses have traditionally referred to society at large (controlled by Satan, according to them) as 'Egypt' and to those who do not belong to the cult as 'Egyptians'... For their part, they are '...the Israelites, the true people of God'" (63).

Cult groups. Moonies.

"At the end of those three days, the Steve Hassan who had entered the work workshop had disappeared, replaced by the new 'Steve Hassan'. I was thrilled to think that I was one of God's 'chosen ones' and that the path of my life was now on the 'true path'" (32).

The IGP likewise perceives that the God who chose him supports and inspires him at every moment.

Folie à deux. Clinical case

"However, taking advantage of the shift change, the two patients escaped, according to them with the help of a divine force" (27).

Nazism

"2. 'In the struggle God is on our side, He wants reason to triumph. That is why the battle, barely begun, has already been won. God, Thou wert with us...! The victory is, therefore, Thine!'" (5).

Cult groups. TFP

"They consider that their very existence, in a world like today's, is a miracle. All their actions are directly assisted by divine grace" (62).

The divine touch is something more than a conviction. It is an intense sensation.

Cult groups. Moonies.

"[...] three quarters (74%) felt a 'close relationship with God' 'very much' or 'extremely much'" (28).

Finally, divine pregnancies are another curious and noteworthy expression of this dynamic.

Crisis cults. Keekhwei: Ramkokamekra prophetess (20th century).

"From these prophecies a messianic uprising arose, and it was an Indian woman, Keekhwei, who took charge of leading it, claiming that she carried in her womb the sister of Aukhe (hero of the ramkokamekra mythology)..." (68).

Crisis cults. Overá, Guaraní leader (16th century).

"He passed himself off as the only son of god, and his name, Overá, meaning 'radiance', represented for his followers and for the chief the splendor of god the father, who had caused him to be conceived by a virgin" (68).

Miracles

The superiority of the paranoid contagion group may derive from its capacity to perform miracles, extraordinary things that common sense says are impossible but which the paranoid contagion group knows to be within its reach.

Sectarian groups. Morabitum

"'Whenever Abdul Jader comes to Granada, it rains.' The followers of Abdul Jader's Islamic group, Morabitum, believe that their leader can influence the elements of that sun-drenched Granada and that he can establish a new Islamic order in Spain" (51).

And during the Great Leap Forward:

Maoist Leninism

"In those days [those of the Great Leap Forward] the practice of telling fantasies to oneself and to others and then believing them abounded to an incredible degree. Peasants would move harvests from several fields and gather them into a single one to show Party officials that they had achieved a miraculous harvest [...] The nation was dominated by 'self-deception through deceiving others'. Numerous people — including various agricultural engineers and Party leaders — claimed to have seen those miracles with their own eyes. Those who failed to emulate the fantastic results invented by others began to doubt themselves and to blame themselves.

[...] Even doctors used to boast of miraculously cured incurable diseases.

Trucks loaded with smiling peasants used to arrive at our complex to report fantastic, unprecedented achievements. One day it was a colossal cucumber that reached half the length of the truck; another day it was a tomato that two children had had difficulty carrying" (42).

Miracles are extraordinary deeds that the PCG believes it has performed or is capable of performing. There is also the possibility of considering as miraculous certain events that are simply explained as the result of chance, or even entirely normal occurrences.

Cult groups. TFP

"Plinio's survival of a serious car accident in 1975 was interpreted by the TFP as the result of a miracle" (62).

A miracle of miraculous repercussions.

Cult groups. TFP

"With his own holocaust, Plinio pulled the TFP out of the serious internal problems that had it in their grip. From that moment on, a far more significant expansion began" (62).

Sokagakkai

"Soon, thanks to his support, many of the members obtained good jobs and began to enjoy the benefits produced by faith in the Gohonzon" (39).

The reality is that the adherents of Soka Gakkai simply took advantage, like the rest of the Japanese, of the postwar years of expansion and economic prosperity. In the publications of Jehovah's Witnesses, one finds miraculous divine interventions that, in some third-world dictatorship or in the times of Nazism, saved this or that witness from execution or from the concentration camps, setting aside the possibility that the incompetence, or the fatigue, or a burst of kindness on the part of the Gestapo agent involved in the miracle could be the true explanation of what had occurred. It is likewise forgotten that thousands of witnesses were indeed detained, tortured, or executed without any intervention from on high to prevent it.

In any case, miracle-working talents characterize both certain megalomaniacal paranoiacs, especially those who attribute healing powers to themselves, and the leaders of cult groups, ...

Crisis cults. Hau-hau (19th century).

"Other miraculous powers were attributed to Te Ua. It was said, for example, that through his familiar spirit (according to tradition, Polynesian sorcerers possessed familiar spirits), which appeared to him in the form of an owl, he was warned of the arrival of a punitive expedition sent to capture him, and that he was thus able to escape. It was believed that incidents such

as these, real or fictitious, had actually occurred, and in this way popular belief in Te Ua was reinforced, along with belief in the power of his personal mana and in his qualities as a chief" (9).

Cult groups. TFP

"Plinio Correa de Oliveira possesses a grace called 'discernment of spirits' that no human being has ever had or will ever have. Thanks to this gift, a simple photograph allows him to make all manner of decisions about those followers of his whom he does not know personally. Plinio also possesses the gift of prophecy, of seeing what others are incapable of seeing" (62). [...] as to the adherents of paranoid contagion groups — provided they fulfill their obligations — ...

Soka Gakkai

"The adherents of this cult believe that if they repeatedly chant a series of mystical words before a rice-paper scroll — the *gohonzon*— they will obtain the power to achieve whatever they desire" (32).

Sectarian Groups. Scientology.

"Highly 'therapeutic' if we take at face value their phantasmagoric 'scientific' texts according to which, through 'Scientological technology' and, most especially, through auditing, all kinds of ailments can be cured, both physical and spiritual, including leukemia, cancer, spinal deviation, short legs, intestinal problems, radiation contamination, etc." (64). [...] as to the group's objects. Sacred books, for example, often have the power to produce extraordinary benefits.

Maoist Leninism

"A nurse told me that in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution that room had been used for patients to study the works of Mao, since his nephew, Mao Yuanxin, had 'discovered' that for the mentally ill the Little Red Book constituted a far better form of cure than medical treatment" (42).

Dismissive Arguments

The opinions with which IGPs judge others deviate from objectivity in equal measure, only in the opposite direction. The same lack of rigor with which they extol themselves allows them to be unjustly critical of others.

Paranoid Personality

"[...] they are very critical of others..." (1).

Paranoid Personality

"[...] they tend to develop negative stereotypes of others..." (2).

Let us now look at two concrete cases of these stereotyped visions.

Paranoia. The Aimée Case

"All these figures — artists, poets, journalists — are collectively hated as the great culprits of society's misfortunes. 'They are a spawn, a race'; 'they do not hesitate to provoke, through their gossip, murder, war, and the corruption of morals, provided they can procure a little glory and pleasure for themselves.' 'They live,' writes our patient, 'off the exploitation of the misery that they themselves unleash'" (48).

French Imperialism.

"All the administrators responsible for introducing the French system agreed on the necessity of a gradual application in the new territories. The physical space and social organization worked against the viability of the immediate adoption of the new administrative system. In the commonplaces concerning the character of the various peoples (the docility of the Tuscans, the feudal mentality of the German lords, the laziness of the Spanish and Neapolitans, and the impassivity of the Dutch) there surfaced the vague belief that most countries suffered from a backwardness owing to an irregular process of civilization" (82).

Other stereotypes contain a greater dose of sophistication.

Sectarian Groups. Hermetic Philosophical Institute

"Tourist compulsion obeys, at its deepest level, these reasons. Millions of people travel with the secret hope of finding themselves in distant countries, continually fleeing their own reality so as not to confront it, under the pretext of rest, relaxation, and leisure.

But where are they really going? Certainly nowhere, and they will never truly arrive anywhere until they undertake their own individual evolutionary path. They are like ants that come and go without rest but always remain in the same place.

Each journey is a new fantasy, an unconscious desire to find something special, without knowing what it is. What truly happens is that, deep down, each individual longs to return to their roots, but cannot consciously visualize that intuition. They cannot realize that what

they truly desire is to reintegrate with being, with the essential 'I am,' from which they have been drifting away since birth" (4).

Purity

We then delve into a curious justification of the superiority complex: purity. In the context of that dichotomous vision of the world in which everything good, everything desirable, and all merits are found within oneself while evil and blame are placed on others, the image of *purity* brings to mind those elements — such as water, diamonds, or gold — that are good in themselves and in which any addition of a different element can only spoil them. The conceptual dyad "purity-contamination" now occupies the place of the classic opposition "allies-enemies."

This paranoid theme, which, as we shall see, also invades on some occasions the territory of frank psychopathology, has two main aspects:

The conviction regarding one's *own purity*, an attribute that the paranoid contagion group clearly sees in itself

The conviction that, if not of purity itself, at least it is in exclusive possession of the means to achieve it, with the consequent compulsive application of those means. These are the activities of *purification*, which we will expand upon somewhat later.

Some paranoiacs with megalomaniacal tendencies (mystical delusions, reformers...) feel freed from impurity: sin, vices, temptations, etc. Furthermore, they tend to think that this quality they possess is shared by very few or by no one. Purity tends to be a rather restricted privilege.

Reformers. Robespierre.

"Some perhaps have good customs, but they betray their principles; others profess principles in words, but lack the customs. No one with such pure customs is so faithful to principles; no one practices such a rigid cult of truth, has such an exact practice of virtue; I am the only one (Speech to the Constituent Assembly)" (19).

The adherents of paranoid associations also come to feel and convince themselves of their purity.

Sokagakkai

"At the very moment she consecrated the Gohonzon in her home, Kiyo Mizusawa felt purified, as if she had been exorcised of an evil spirit" (39).

With semantic variations, there are always two worlds: that of the IGP, the pure one, and the contaminated one.

Cult groups. Hare Krishna.

"- Are there any good feelings you are aware of when you come home? -I wanted to know.

-Yes -he said, enthusiastically-. I love my parents, my sisters and my brother very much.

-Then he restrained himself and added-: But they are living in a material world" (32).

The emotional plane of superiority

Nazism

"The Hitler Youth is an educational community in service of a worldview. He who marches with the Hitler Youth is not merely one more number among millions, but the soldier of an idea..." (Schirach B, cited in 34).

Unfortunately, there is no term that precisely delineates pride as a *sensation*—subjective feeling—from pride as a *belief*-in-one's-own-superiority. But it is clear that these two aspects of pride can be differentiated from one another: the intellectual aspect of convictions and the emotional aspect of sensations—in this case, pleasurable ones. And perhaps it is in patriotic exaltation where this emotional component of the superiority complex is best reflected.

Turkish nationalism.

"To be Turkish: what pride!' The great inscription on the mountain that presides over the city of Van, the very place where a few weeks ago a hotel burned down in a terrorist act..." (23).

Italian Fascism.

"It is the pride of constantly feeling Italian" (Benito Mussolini, quoted in 34).

Nazism

"How many are there who know the many signs that recall the greatness of the Fatherland... the legitimate pride of belonging to a nation so singularly privileged?... one may feel that legitimate pride that flows from having the honor of belonging to such a nation..." (36).

In any case, the same dynamic occurs in other paranoid contagion groups that are not nations.

Sokagakkai

"All those present overflowed with pride and a deep sense of mission as they witnessed the gathering" (39).

The behavioral plane

We now arrive at the third stratum: that of objective, observable behaviors.

Arrogance

One must highlight the display of a characteristic attitude toward others, a way of relating to one's fellow human beings that permanently reflects what the paranoid contagion group member thinks and feels.

Delusion of interpretation

"[...] haughty attitude [...] disdain toward one's surroundings..." (69).

Victimists

"[...] is associated with numerous undesirable personality traits such as [...] less [...] humility" (12).

Paranoia

"[...] and they show themselves arrogant, haughty..." (44).

This arrogance manifests itself, first and foremost, in the immoderately favorable —or overtly megalomaniacal— opinions about oneself— that the IPP expresses publicly, without any shame. Not only do they think it, but they also say it.

Factor QIV of the 16PF test

"[...] boastful, vain..." (43).

The paranoid relationship. Tizón

"But, as he tends to feel harmed and persecuted, he is therefore a *avenger of wrongs*, who displays his moral qualities in contrast to the immorality that surrounds him" (74).

The charismatic leaders of APs end up being grotesque in the way they present themselves.

Sokagakkai

"He is quite frank; when asked: what is it like to be President of the Sokagakkai? he once replied: 'I am the leader of Japan; its president, monarch of its spiritual world, leader of all its thought and culture, and holder of supreme authority' (79).

J.O.N.S.

"*Ramiro Ledesma* was twenty-five years old when he took over the editorship of *La Conquista del Estado*, this moment coinciding with his entry into active politics. A truly strange entrance for those who had known him before, for those who had witnessed his

early youth as a metaphysician, as a student of philosophy and mathematics, reflected in his contributions to the *Revista de Occidente*. This publication was the most prestigious intellectual forum in Spain during those years, directed by Ortega y Gasset, Ledesma Ramos's philosophical master and mentor during his student years. Ledesma's journalistic and political activity represented for him a radical abandonment of his previous pursuits, at a time when the finest academic prospects were opening up before him along that path. This is one of the episodes of his life that his friends of that time find hardest to explain, and it has no other explanation than the profound generosity of this man, a true founder's existence, with a mystical devotion to the national revolution that he began to sense was coming" (50).

What is surprising about this brief biographical sketch is not so much its laudatory tone as the fact that it was Ramiro Ledesma himself who wrote it, speaking of himself in the third person.

Arrogance also manifests itself in the tendency to not mince words when expressing critical opinions about others.

Factor QIV of the 16PF test

"[...] likes [...] others, as well as criticizing them" (43).

But it is not essential for the IP to verbally express these views about himself and others for his pride and contempt for many of those around him to become apparent; nonverbal language is no less eloquent.

Paranoia

"[...] look down on their adversaries" (44).

Arrogance is also evident in the excessive formalism, and even solemnity, of their behavior and language during social interaction. In this case, the IPP grants himself, in *his manner*, an importance he does not possess. Note the terminology used by an "army" made up of fewer than ten members but which, nevertheless, stood *toe to toe* with the American state.

Sectarian-Leninist groupuscule. SLA

"The SLA had declared war on the United States, it said, and this was a revolution of the poor and oppressed against *Amerikkka* fascist. Quite formally, he intoned that I had been 'arrested' by a combat unit of the Symbionese Liberation Army for being the daughter of Randolph A. Hearst, whom he called 'corporate enemy of the people'.

'You are a prisoner of war of the Symbionese Liberation Army,' declared [...] you will be treated according to the Geneva Convention governing prisoners of war" (33).

Struggle for prestige and intolerance of criticism

Sokagakkai

"One day, when the unprecedented nature of our work toward the achievement of kosen-rufu is understood, the world will be left in awe and admiration of us" (39).

Sokagakkai

"Outsiders cannot understand it. Not even you understand it. But believe me, when kosen-rufu is achieved, the whole world will praise us and be astounded by our accomplishments" (39).

Widespread recognition, admiration, appear here as something that will happen in the future. But in reality, rather than a prediction, it is a wish.

Querulants

"Kahn (1928) described several of the characteristics he believed to be important in these personalities. He thought that [...] they use complaints as an 'instrument for their thirst for prestige' (67).

For paranoid personalities, the admiration of those around them is also a priority objective.

Sokagakkai

"(2) The member must become the most respected person and most trusted in their workplace" (79).

Note that it is not simply a matter of achieving respect and admiration, but of occupying the top position in the prestige hierarchy. In cult groups, this insistence to members that they must become admired figures in their environment is very common. The most common argument used to defend this rule is that of proselytism. The ideal member is depicted as a beacon or a light that attracts people to the group, drawn in by admiration.

The other side of the obsession with recognition and prestige is the intolerance of criticism.

Paranoid personality

"[...] they have great difficulty accepting criticism directed at them" (1).

For the paranoid individual, criticism represents a serious affront, one that strikes at the very core of their exacerbated sense of honor and calls for a response proportional to the harm suffered. This attitude is a frequent cause of conflict.

Intolerance of criticism, however minor, is also frequently reported by the parents and spouses of members of cult groups; it is one of the many changes that cult conversion produces almost without exception. Family members recount that some comments or suggestions, that previously were taken without much issue, now trigger furious reactions.

Demand for privileges and deference

Alongside the dyad "demand-for-praise/intolerance-of-criticism" sits a second, closely related dyad, which includes the following two poles:

demand for privileged treatment, a demand that springs from the paranoid perception of oneself as someone unique and exceptional,

Nazism

"Everywhere, Germans must appear with that superiority to which they are entitled by virtue of belonging to the 'Herrenvolk' (Herrenvolk: people, or race, of masters)" (5).

intolerance of contempt and humiliation; if there is one thing the paranoid individual cannot bear, it is being treated *as just another face* in the crowd, as a nobody, and even less so being looked down upon.

But the humiliation to which the PCI reacts in a disproportionate manner may also be fantasized.

Paranoid character. Clinical case

"Those who looked at me as they passed by despised me with all their might; if anyone turned around to observe that solitary nonentity, they laughed. It was above all the pretty girls, dressed in white or red, dark-haired and white-toothed, who were cruelest to me. I often heard behind me the burst of their laughter. Perhaps they were not laughing at me, but in those moments I was certain of the contrary, and I suffered. Every possibility of living a beautiful life seemed to me to be denied to me, the solitary one, to me, the loveless one, to me, the luckless one. Those people paid me no attention or despised me, and went on their way without a care, knowing nothing of the sorrows of a poor, dreaming adolescent. And then, suddenly, I revolted. I felt within me the flow of blood, an effervescence throughout my entire being: No! No! No!, I cried inwardly, this will not end here! I am also a man, I also want to be great and happy. What do you think, you stupid men and well-dressed women, who pass by my side with such ease? You will soon find out what I am going to do! I want to be more than you, more than anyone, to stand above the whole world. I am short, poor and ugly, but I have a soul, I too have a soul, and that soul will cry out so loudly that you will all have to turn your heads and listen to me. And then I will be someone and you will continue to be nobody. And I will create, and I will shout and I will think, and I will become great among

the great, and you will go on eating, sleeping and walking just as you do now. And when I pass, everyone will look at me, and beautiful ladies will then have their attention fixed on me, and smiling girls will want me by their side and will clasp my hands with a shudder, and the most respectable men will raise their hats and hold them high above their heads when I pass, I, I myself, I the great, the genius, the hero" (29).

The first of the privileges that the IP claims for himself is that of not being subject to the same rules or limitations as others.

Paranoia

"It is also due to this arrogant opinion of himself that the patient considers the most immoral means permissible insofar as they are useful for harming his adversary, while the smallest form of legal restriction applied to his person is conceived as a scandalous attack" (44).

Warriors. The samurai bushido

"The *bushi* held that his high social position demanded a nobler standard of truthfulness than that of the merchant or the peasant. *Bushi no ichi-gon* ('the word of a samurai', or in its exact German equivalent, *Ritterwort*) was sufficient guarantee of truthfulness in his assertions. His word carried such weight that promises were generally made and kept without any written commitment existing, as the latter would have been considered unbecoming of his dignity" (54).

The refusal to submit can be taken to reckless extremes

Moon

"For example, his disregard for legal and accounting matters led him to prison" (32).

It is not only a matter of legal obligations and prohibitions. The ethical obligations that he so rigorously demands of others do not apply to his own person.

Delusion of grievance

"[...] they commit acts of rudeness, breaches of trust, swindles..." (69).

As a curious instance of this tendency to grant oneself privileges, let us consider the following quotation. A small AP is strongly hostile to divorce. But for a small elite (themselves) the matter is different.

Sectarian groups. Hermetic Philosophical Institute

"If we acknowledge that despite all that has been set forth there exists a certain number of conscious and more evolved individuals than the common run, it must be understood that if

any of them divorces, this will not exert a negative impact on their family or their children, nor will their separation be a cause of hatred or disharmony between the spouses, but rather a matter of mutual agreement" (4).

The deference that the IP demands carries with it the right to always deal with those in the highest positions of responsibility, and not with subordinates.

Paranoia. The Aimée Case

"The woman refused to explain her act, except to the commissioner" (48).

Folie à deux. Clinical case

"They arrived together in Paris, coming from the south, on December 5, 1872, and without further delay made their way to Versailles, asking to see the President of the Republic and to obtain justice..." (49).

The freedom he grants himself is complete: he judges, condemns... and carries out the sentence.

Delusion of grievance. The Aub case

"He draws up a list of 19 guilty parties and, weighing the responsibility of each one, establishes four categories of victims: three are condemned to death (two political victims and one personal), four will receive very severe wounds. Seven more or less serious wounds and, lastly, another five will receive minor wounds" (69).

The superiority (of the patriot, of the sectarian, of the IP) naturally leads to the self-attribution of an important right: the right to command.

English nationalism

"Finally in England, racism also develops paired with nationalism... racism appears closely linked from early on to British colonial expansion and, more precisely, to the project of building an empire. From this point of view, Benjamin Disraëli is a central figure. This statesman does not think in terms of colonies -'the colonies', Disraëli exclaims on one occasion, 'that dead weight which we do not govern ourselves!'-, but in terms of empire; it was he who established British administration in India, ensuring -Hannah Arendt affirms- 'the installation in a foreign country of a closed caste whose sole objective was to govern, and not to colonize" (80).

Sectarian groups. The Patriarch

"And we will continue as advisors. We will have a Central Office of advice. We will be the advisors in social services of humanity [...] and saying that we will be the social service of humanity does not imply that we will do the work ourselves, by no means" (24).

Pharaonic works

It is characteristic of totalitarian societies the insistence on projecting their greatness (and that of the leader) in architecture. Consequently, they embark on architectural projects designed to impress through their enormous size.

Nazism

"The Führer made frequent and unannounced visits to Speer, generally accompanied by an aide who carried a folder full of plans that Hitler would study with Speer. The two men often spent hours bent over the most impressive construction projects; after all, they intended to transform the Reich into a country in which colossal structures would reflect the glory of the Führer, the party and the State..." (76).

Nazism

"On January 30, 1937, exactly four years after his rise to power, Speer was given his greatest commission. Hitler commissioned him, giving him free rein, to transform Berlin, over a period of 15 years, into a monument of 'imperial grandeur' befitting a thousand-year Reich. Berlin would be called Germania..."

Hitler had planned for years to transform Berlin into a gigantic metropolis of wide avenues, massive structures, triumphal arches, majestic buildings, stations, stadiums and areas for military parades. He often said that Berlin would surpass cities such as London, Paris and Vienna, and that it could only be compared to ancient cities such as Thebes, Babylon or Rome. The new Germania, with its 'imperial grandeur', was to be dominated by an enormous stadium with a copper dome. The building, nearly 300 meters tall, would be the largest in the world. Something akin to the Pantheon in Rome" (76).

Maoist Leninism

"The tenth anniversary of the proclamation of the People's Republic was approaching, and a grand celebration was being prepared. During the last ten months, millions of Chinese had been working to complete Mao's ten great construction projects in time for the tenth anniversary. Every citizen of Beijing had taken part in the works in a new form of labor conscription by order of the twentieth-century emperor of China. Just as Qin Shi Huangdi had built the Great Wall and all subsequent emperors had each carried out their own grandiose

constructions, Mao had decided to build ten great buildings to commemorate the tenth anniversary of his reign. Tiananmen was expanded to reach its current dimensions, with the capacity to hold half a million people, and with the Palace of the People's Assembly and the Museum of the Revolution on either side of it" (20).

Maoist Leninism

"In China, the May Day and October First parades had been copied from the Soviet model, but by then I was already tired of the military displays and the waste that all of it entailed. Not even Red Square, with its cathedrals, its palaces, and its cobblestone streets, seemed particularly appealing to me. Two years later, when Tiananmen Square was expanded to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the revolution, I believe China sought to compete with the Soviet Union to build the largest square in the world" (20).

This same tendency appears in some APs, although the results are obviously always more modest. The megalomaniacal drift leads them to plan buildings that are disproportionate to the group's means. In the case I present below, the megalomania becomes evident both in the very name given to the project and in its pretensions.

Hermetic Philosophical Institute

"A work of unsuspected scope, a mega-project to blow all limits, a grandiose instrument for spreading the work of our Master is, among other aspects, the Kosmos Project. [...] That this headquarters of the Kosmos project be, at a given moment, something equivalent to the pyramids, a construction in which the meaning of what is the most important thing a human being can do is embodied..." (60).

Purification

Purification can constitute a simple metaphor with which to refer, for example, to the elimination of dissidents or to the modification of a society's culture.

Soviet Leninism

"[...] several hundred of these gentlemen must be expelled abroad without mercy. We will purify Russia for a long time. It must be done at once" (77).

German Nationalism

"The Volk, thus, became the intermediary and the expression of a transcendent essence, the foundation of all that was good in Germany or of any higher good that could be developed.

For Germans to be truly free and capable of superior achievements, life and thought should be authentically grounded in the Volk and purged of external and corrupting influences" (58).

But in this section I wish to refer rather to another type of behavior characteristic of the paranoid spectrum.

a) Fasting

With regard to the means employed to purge contaminating elements and approach perfection, there appear to be tendencies that repeat themselves across different paranoid contagion groups. Let us begin with dietary deprivations.

Paranoia

"God is my father and the church my mother," said a patient who through frequent fasting attempted to do away with all earthly feelings within himself and thereby attain an intimate relationship with God" (44).

In some paranoid personalities, especially orientalist cults, fasting is conceived as a means of purification insofar as those who practice it distance themselves from the material and the coarse. It is a brief attempt to draw closer to the world of immaterial beings. In paranoid personalities of naturopathic orientation, fasting is seen as a means of cleansing oneself of the toxins found in food, especially in meats and in all non-natural products, or those produced by non-"biological" methods. On the other hand, the practice of fasting may respond to motivations that *a priori* bear no clear relation to purification: asceticism, for example, or blackmail (hunger strikes, to which certain fanatics eager to flirt with the risk of a glorious death willingly lend themselves).

There are also paranoid diets, which distinguish between foods considered impure — most often meats — and those considered pure. One need only abstain from consuming the former in order to avoid contamination. These diets offer a somewhat more comfortable and prolonged purification than that of absolute fasting.

The propensity to follow this type of diet is not mentioned in clinical descriptions, but I have been able to hear of it from several of my paranoid-paranoiac patients. It is, however, very common in the universe of sectarian groups of eastern and naturist orientation, to the point that in some of them it constitutes their *leit motif*.

b) Washing

Purity can also be achieved through the performance of rituals, with washing rituals being the most typical.

Crisis cults. The Melanesian cargo (20th c.)

"L. then taught that people should purify themselves through a ritual washing. He washed all the men and then the women and children under a waterfall of the river Topake explaining that he did so in order for them to be ready to receive the new teaching and to be protected for the future" (70).

The Hare Krishnas shower prescriptively several times a day, and in this habit they justify, in part, their claim to be *the pure ones*.

The *washing* can be used, metaphorically, to refer to activities that are not related to the purification of the body but to that of the mind. Thus, a synonym that the authorities of Maoism used to refer to reeducation was *-hsi nao* brainwashing-. The *new man* would supposedly emerge after a painful process of purification in which one had to shed the feudal and bourgeois past, the ultimate origin of all evils.

c) Isolation

Being pure means living permanently exposed to the risk of contamination, as the most common source of contaminating agents is ordinary humans. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that IGPs develop strategies aimed at isolation.

A patient with marked schizo-paranoid traits told me about the reasons for his social isolation. 'Most people have vices such as drinking alcohol or constantly thinking about sex.' When dealing with this type of people, the majority, the patient felt subtly tempted by said vices. Hence he barely associated with anyone except some former members of the sectarian group in which he had been a militant in his youth, for a few years, with whom he would meet to hold conversations on social and political matters.

Basque nationalism

"The claim to possess a unique linguistic and racial character upon which Basque nationalism was founded sounds familiar to anyone acquainted with the petit-bourgeois radical right: the Basques were superior to other peoples on account of their racial purity, demonstrated by the unique nature of their language, which indicated a refusal to intermingle with other peoples, particularly Arabs and Jews" (37).

This rejection of the *other*, when significant, takes shape in concrete measures aimed at preventing contamination.

Basque nationalism

"Radicalism and realism combine in the regulations that Arana draws up for the *Euskeldun Batzokija* society, founded by him in 1894. From the outset, in order to be a full member it

will be essential that the applicant possess 'his four first surnames of Basque origin', and if married, that his spouse meet that same condition. To be an adherent — the lower grade of membership — the candidate will need to possess two Basque surnames among the first four, or alternatively, that his surnames, even if not Basque, were inherited from grandparents born in Basque territory (art. 59)" (73).

Nazism

"4. Only a true German, of Aryan blood, regardless of his religion or his beliefs, can be a citizen of the State..." (from the NSDAP programme, February 1920).

Not only must the contamination of a people's genetic endowment be prevented, but it must also be purified, and its impurities eliminated.

Nazism

"... let it be clearly established that only physically healthy beings free of racial defects may cease to be unmarried" (35).

Nazism

"On July 14, 1933, a law instituted the sterilization of individuals with defects" (18).

And all of this in order to project toward an ideal: that of immaculate genetic perfection.

Nazism

"The agronomist engineer, minister and head of the Reich's farmers, Walther Darré, affirmed in one of his writings: 'Here the new aristocracy is taking shape. Bringing together the finest blood. In the same way that we have bred our traditional Hanoverian horse from fathers and mothers that had been kept pure, we will also breed, from the finest German blood, through selective crossbreeding, over the course of generations, the pure type of the Nordic German. Perhaps we will not be able to purify the entire German people, but the new German aristocracy will be bred by special methods'" (83).

d) Fixation of attention

The carrying out of monotonous mental exercises in which attention is fixed on something (on a text that is repeated incessantly, or a simple mantra, or an external object, or a part of the body, or a stereotyped movement...) in such a way that both internal dialogues and mental images and emotions are excluded from the field of consciousness, constitutes a practice of many AP (which may even be the primary one).

These are widely disseminated exercises today, which many people use as a treatment for their anxiety or as a tool for personal growth. But there are differences between the normal individual and the PA adept in the way they carry them out. The former performs them with utilitarian, tangible, and less ambitious goals; the most obvious is the achievement of well-being. The PA adept, on the other hand, carries them out in the certainty that through their practice they will transcend themselves. They are also distinguished by the compulsive manner in which the IPP performs their exercises, devoting a disproportionate amount of time to them that always seems insufficient.

Through attention-fixation exercises, one battles (almost always unsuccessfully) to drive passions, emotions, everyday concerns... all excessively mundane elements, from the field of consciousness, fixing attention on an object that has almost always been sacralized and upon which salvation depends. This behavior can be seen as an attempt at purification (the individual freeing themselves from the most vulgar and undesirable psychological contents) through which they attain a new and superior estatus.

Sokagakkai

"Those who practice true Buddhism [tirelessly repeating the same mantra] in accordance with the guidance of the Soka Gakkai will attain the State of Buddha. The good we do will benefit our families, our children, and our grandchildren in future generations" (40).

Sokagakkai

"This state is called the momentary state of Buddha (*setsuna jodo*), the state in which a human being attains the state of Buddha while still in their mortal body (*sokushin jobutsu*)" (40).

In my practice, I have been able to meet several IP who had persevered in the practice of oriental meditation for years and in solitude, without any kind of external reinforcement. I have also been able to treat a patient with mystical delusions, a former prostitute, who devoted entire nights to prayer (and to reading the Holy Scriptures), in an endless battle against the thoughts that Satan deposited in her mind.

It is curious that military training exercises involve the carrying out of monotonous and repetitive activities (marches, carefully prepared ceremonies, the intoning of choral chants, chants that allude to the love of the homeland, to the pride of belonging to a particular military corps, to boldness on the battlefield...). These exercises require a sustained effort of concentration that, apparently, serves no purpose in terms of better physical or technical preparation for the battlefield. However, they seem to play an important role in the psychological preparation for the transformation of the simple recruit into a true soldier. The parallels between exercises designed to forge peaceful holy men and those intended to produce professionals in the use of arms cannot help but seem curious.

e) The purifying war

Finally, and surprisingly, war itself has been presented as an activity in which the nation as a whole, and its citizens, can enjoy an experience of purification. It is in the context of a state of paranoid exaltation that war is valued as something positive, an end in itself, and not solely as an inevitable lesser evil by which to achieve legitimate objectives under certain extreme circumstances.

Maoist Leninism

"Revolutionary war is an antitoxin, which will not only destroy the enemy's poison, but will also purge us of all filth" (52).

Japanese nationalism

"Like the European nationalisms, the Shintoist State conceived of war as a sacred enterprise. The popular writer Tokutomi Iichiro described the Second World War using the terminology characteristic of Shintoist purification ceremonies: 'For the Japanese, the great war of East Asia is a purification exorcism, a purifying ablution' (22).

When one asks what a war can cleanse, patriotic warmongering discourses always give the same answer: selfishness, disunity among fellow citizens, and the forgetting of love for the homeland.

f) The impossible perfection

The myth of absolute purity creates a paradox that is difficult to resolve when purification does not produce the expected results.

Sectarian groups. TFP

"Acne is supposed to be due to impurity..." (62).

Sectarian groups. TFP

"It is supposed that the adepts can neither belch, nor pass wind, nor have nocturnal emissions. All of this is a consequence of original sin" (62).

But the contradictions between reality and the principle of perfect purity never call into question the fundamental beliefs of the AP. There is an explanation for everything. Almost always the fault will lie with the adept, who has necessarily failed in something.

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