

LITERATURE AS
PHILOSOPHY OF
PSYCHOPATHOLOGY:
WILLIAM FAULKNER AS
WITTGENSTEINIAN

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ABSTRACT: I argue that the language of some schizophrenic persons is akin to the language of Benjy in Williams Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury*, in one crucial respect: Faulkner displays to us language that, ironically, cannot be translated or interpreted into sense . . . without irreducible 'loss' or 'garbling.' The same is true of famous schizophrenic writers, such as Renee and Schreber. Such 'garbling' is of an odd kind, admittedly: it is a garbling that inadvisably turns nonsense into sense. . . . Faulkner's language is a language of paradox, of nonsense masquerading beautifully as sense. When this language works, it generates the powerful illusion that we can make sense of the 'life-world' of a young child or an 'idiot'—or a sufferer from chronic schizophrenia. But this remains, contrary to Louis Sass's claims, an illusion.

Thus, drawing on the thinking of Wittgenstein (his *On Certainty*, especially, with its incisive critique of the very idea of being able to make claims or statements from within a sufficiently altered [non]state of mind) and of the Wittgensteinian literary critic James Guetti (who critiques the very idea of 'deranged language' being paraphrased into sense), I argue that the most impenetrable cases of schizophrenia may be cases not of a sense being made that we cannot grasp, nor of a different form of life, but, despite appearances, of no sense, *no form of life*, at all. This is an option that has not really been considered in the literature of/on psychopathology to date. And it can be tentatively

established, not through a dubious scientism, but through a careful attention to the literature of the insane and the literature of Modernism.

KEYWORDS: Sass, Guetti, schizophrenia, Benjy, Schreber, *The Sound and the Fury*.

IN THIS PAPER I explore a direct connection between literature and what is nowadays most often called *the philosophy of psychopathology*. I expound a literary critic—James Guetti—putting Wittgenstein to work, in thinking about the work of William Faulkner. I then extrapolate some morals concerning the philosophy of mental health and illness, psychology, and psychiatry. If my extrapolation is effective, I will have presented to the reader a way of seeing Faulkner *as Wittgensteinian*, in a way that yields a distinctive and novel set of doubts concerning whether severe mental illnesses (e.g., so-called hard cases of schizophrenia) can be usefully said to be understood or understandable (at all).

But oughtn't we first to take a step back and ask: How ought one to think of the impact of Wittgenstein's philosophizing on literature, or more generally of the relation between the two?

Then again, as Wittgenstein so often maintained, one ought not to be too quick to assume that a question that most naturally suggests itself is in fact the right question to ask. In this case, we should not be too quick to assume that one could in the first place comfortably divide questions concerning esthetics and concerning the meaning of literature from questions concerning (say) philosophy of mind, or (more specifically) philosophy of mental health and illness. Wittgenstein very frequently moved seamlessly from (say) philosophy of mind to philosophy of maths (see, for example, the closing page of his *Philosophical Investigations* [1958]) or from esthetics to meta-philosophy and philosophy of psychology (see, for example, pp.14–18 of his *On Certainty* [1966]). Fundamentally, he rejected the division of philosophy into separate subject areas. If we are to follow him in thinking about literature—and about psychology—then we should consider doing the same.

There have been various efforts in recent years to apply Wittgensteinian methods to the understanding of various serious mental illnesses, especially schizophrenia. The most notable is that of the clinical psychologist, Louis Sass. Sass's approach is most novel in its analogies between Modern art, literature, and philosophy and the form—and diagnosis—of schizophrenia. Whereas *schizophrenia* is almost invariably seen these days as a disease or disorder or phenomenon of functional or cognitive deficit, Sass reads it instead as centrally involving alienation, cognitive excess, hyper-reflexivity, and even 'hyper-rationality.'¹ Sass severely questions whether anyone has as yet developed an adequate account of the character of schizophrenic delusions. He proposes his own account, in which such delusions are like the delusions suffered by a philosopher who finds themselves drawn into absurdities (e.g., the solipsist or the private linguist). In sum, Sass argues that we can understand the key features of schizophrenia by analogy to the character of highly inward-looking Modernism—and then by analogy to how Wittgenstein diagnostically offers an account of solipsism.

I do not intend to discuss Sass's work in detail here. I follow him in very largely rejecting scien-

tific or quasi-scientific explanations of schizophrenia, primarily because—even if effective within their own terms (e.g., predictively)—such explanations fail to deliver any improved understanding of schizophrenia. They fail, for example, to give us a handle on its phenomenology. Understanding some of the causes behind schizophrenia, as probably we increasingly do, is not then, in my sense, understanding schizophrenia, understanding the people who suffer from it, or understanding the form and flow of their thoughts and life. I find Sass's critique of existing accounts of schizophrenia to be very stimulating and very effective; but I do not believe that his efforts to offer a positive alternative Wittgensteinian understanding of schizophrenia, even via literature, are likely to be successful. Rather, a properly Wittgensteinian approach would, I suspect, show that, except in some very remote and vague sense of *understanding*, there probably cannot be any such thing as understanding the words, actions, and experiences of the very severely mentally ill, those who might perhaps truly be worth calling deeply different from ourselves.

And let me be quite clear here: when I speak of *the very severely mentally ill*, I may be using that term in a more restrictive way than is at first apparent to the ear. I mean to speak of those on whom, I suggest, all our efforts to understand founder. Not a case of (say) auditory hallucination where we can reach agreement with the voice hearer at least on what they take themselves to be hearing, but a case where our every effort fails either by our own lights or by theirs. A case such as that of Schreber or of Renée. Both Schreber and Renee consistently rejected the understandings offered by others—and even by themselves—of their experiences. (For detail, and further consideration of *clinical material*, see Read [2001a].)²

In short, I am concerned here with severe cases, cases that seem to require for their possible comprehension a whole new mode of representation (as in Faulkner; see below). And what I aim to argue regarding such cases is that sophisticated appreciation of Wittgenstein and Modern Literature tends toward a more pessimistic or

negative conclusion than Sass's. To the deflationary conclusion, that is, that we are ill advised to claim that serious cases of schizophrenia can be successfully understood or interpreted via Wittgenstein or literature (or by any other means).

In a way, I am extending Sass's line of argument: I want to suggest that we have not been given good reason to think that there can be any such thing as understanding an actual person who is thoroughly in the grip of such absurdities as Sass describes. To do so, to be able truly to understand a lived solipsism, would be somewhat like understanding "logically alien thought"—but the point, as Wittgenstein was the first to argue, is that there is no such thing as (what we will in the end be satisfied to call) logically alien *thought* (*a fortiori*, there cannot be any such thing as understanding 'it').²

I intend to begin arguing this in detail by discussing briefly how one ought to understand Wittgenstein's important remarks on dreams and altered states of consciousness in *On Certainty* (and of certain remarks in *Philosophical Investigations*), and drawing a partial analogy to hard cases of schizophrenia. I will then use Guetti's reading of Faulkner to rebut an obvious objection to my conclusion drawn from *On Certainty*.

For Wittgenstein, it is very important to note that veridical accounts of dreams can only be given from outside the dream context. This is, so to speak a conceptual point, not an empirical one. It is, for instance, what renders the whole procedure of Cartesian doubt so pointless and logically awry

If someone believes that he has flown from America to England in the last few days, then, I believe, he cannot be making a *mistake*. [For that would be 'too big' to be a mistake.] // And just the same if someone says that he is at this moment sitting at a table and writing.

But even if in such cases I can't be mistaken, isn't it possible that I am drugged?" If I am and if the drug has taken away my consciousness, then I am not now really talking and thinking. I cannot seriously suppose that I am at this moment dreaming. Someone who, dreaming, says "I am dreaming," even if he speaks audibly in doing so, is no more right than if he said in his dream "It is raining" while it was in fact raining. Even if his dream were actually connected with the noise of the rain. (Wittgenstein 1969, 675–676)

One might try putting Wittgenstein's point here thus: Cartesian skepticism is pragmatically self-refuting. If one allegedly supposes that one is dreaming, then it follows from the supposition that one is not engaged in normal potentially public talk or thought. One's quasi-thought in such circumstances—in this case, the mental occurrence of "I am dreaming"—is not a serious candidate for truth evaluation, and so on. One is not correctly placed to make a *claim*. (If one *is* correctly placed to make such a claim, contrariwise, one is no longer fully in the dream.) So, any quasi-claim one makes while dreaming, while asleep, need not be taken seriously. There is nothing that it *is* to take such a pseudo-claim seriously.

So far so good. But we can see also that Wittgenstein would be traduced were one to take such pragmatic self-refutation to be somehow inferior to real or semantic self-refutation. Wittgenstein's point is that Cartesian skepticism cannot even get off the ground—it makes no truth claims or truth denials to evaluate. We have here, then, the whole mainstream epistemological tradition condensed into a drop of grammar.

Now, this does not imply that there cannot be any such thing as someone enjoying or enduring the mental occurrence, *I am dreaming*, or that such occurrent quasi-thoughts do not, by means of an apparently quite logical process, eventuate sometimes perhaps in a real mental confusion or paralysis, which can take on a Cartesian mode of presentation. If we think of schizoid intellectuals in certain moods, or indeed of sufferers from schizophrenia—for example, of the famous cases of Daniel P. Schreber or Adolf Wolfli—in the light of Wittgenstein's remarks, then ought we to say simply that they are confused? That they made/make clear mistakes, errors? Are they, as the influential 'cognitive deficit' accounts of schizophrenia would suggest, simply the victims of frequent or more or less permanent mistakenness?

A genuinely Wittgensteinian view, if we are to work with the vital passage from *On Certainty* just quoted, would rather involve not just a questioning (as in Sass's work) of the crude mainstream picture of schizophrenics as poor reality testers, and a remarking (as in Sass's work) of the

analogies between their testimonies concerning themselves and (say) solipsistic philosophic moments (which involve not error by a mythology of language), but also a clear noticing of the limited degree to which we can take seriously—or even comprehend—what they (sufferers from severe schizophrenic delusion) say, at all. *Quasi-thought*, thought or talk in the nowhere beyond the limits of thought, consisting of quasi-thoughts which are, roughly, logically alien, which can only be mentally compassed through an overly hopeful and presumptuous process of analogy, or through imaginative mental projection of quite dubious status, is simply not, strictly speaking, to be regarded as comprehensible. As Wittgenstein once remarked, in discussing the related problem of private language: “I cannot accept his testimony because it is not *testimony*. It only tells me what he is *inclined* to say” (1958, 386) We must be wary of taking seriously—of thinking that we can interpret—what there is/are no clear criteria for, no clear criteria for evaluation of. And one cannot evaluate mere inclinations for their epistemic reliability. One can only evaluate (for example) testimony.

An account of a dream can be given only from outside a dream, and inside the ordinary. But with severe schizophrenia, one might say, there is no outside. There is no such thing experientially (for the sufferer) as an outside to the psychosis, or at least to the kind of continual oscillation between systemic quasi-solipsistic delusion and everyday reality we find in most of the case history of, for example, Schreber (see, for instance, Sass [1994] and Schreber [1988]).

While: outside (ordinary) thought there is arguably nothing but the nothing that is (for example) psychosis. Now, we are likely to continue to want to call psychotic experience a kind of *experience*—but probably not one that can be rendered in terms making sense. After a certain point, moments of lucidity cannot count for much—where all would-be testimony is only more inclination to speak,³ where *the patient themselves* is no more confident of their so-called testimony than of their so-called delusions. If Sass is roughly right about the analogy between schizophrenia and solipsism, and if Wittgenstein

is (philosophically) right, on my reading of him, then it follows that badly off schizophrenics are *not (even) in the reality-testing game*.³ But this *negative* remark is *as close as we can get* to an accurate or apposite positive characterization of what game it is that they *are* playing.

For, to be outside delusions (outside the ‘fly bottle,’ ‘inside’ ordinary life) is ipso facto no longer to be a first-personal authority on this condition. A retrospective account, one prescinding from the form of the condition, of the delusions, is not authoritative. But an ‘internal’⁵ account is an account without authority either: it is *at best* what someone is *inclined* to say, rather than a *testimony* as to what their experience is. The ‘accounts’ given by the very severely mentally ill of their experiences are in this respect precisely like the ‘account’ Wittgenstein’s dreamer gives of what is happening to him while he is dreaming. To say it again, bluntly: such ‘accounts’ do not constitute testimony. To rely upon such ‘accounts’ is to be victim to a deep philosophical illusion.

Ergo, there can be *no* authoritative first-person account of what severe schizophrenic experience is like. And so, strictly speaking, any such candidate accounts cannot themselves be anything more than nonsense. (Thus purely empathetic understanding of sufferers from chronic schizophrenia, which might be thought to be an *alternative* possibility to the kind of understanding of another’s motives, reasons, and so on, which I am mostly focusing on here, is [also] ruled out. We had better say: There is just no such thing as my understanding what it is like to be you, if there is no such thing as you understanding what it is like to be you. *What it is like to be you* is just undefined, we might most usefully say, in such cases.)

Now, where we cannot genuinely learn from asking the person themselves, or from an autobiography, I submit that ultimately we have *no* adequate means of evaluating/testing the reliability of any account that *we* should like to give. We have recourse then only to purely external, scientific accounts—and, as already remarked, I do not believe that such accounts can ever enable us genuinely to understand a human being.

That is my suggestion, paradoxical and uncomfortable though it might seem. I claim that the kinds of resources we humans have for understanding one another—for understanding one another's *actions* and being, resources drawn upon in literature and elaborated and stylized in the human/social sciences—are largely *not present* in hard cases of schizophrenia, including in those who (like Schreber) seem shot through with thinking and introspection.

But if one accepts Wittgenstein's line of thought in *On Certainty* and *Philosophical Investigations*, then—without immediately retreating to a scientific and simplistic cognitive deficit account of schizophrenia—it may yet appear that a plausible and natural route of objection to my claim remains open. That objection would run roughly as follows:

Perhaps you still have in mind too narrow a model of what 'understanding' must be; perhaps the language of schizophrenics might safely be said to give us a way of speaking about the nature of schizophrenic experience in *something* like the way that the language of the stream-of-consciousness novel gave us a way of understanding/representing/speaking about the nature of thinking. (A way which has since become popular in for instance English and Composition classes [e.g., so-called "Intensive writing," perhaps some 'brainstorming'], as well as in certain forms of psychoanalysis and therapy.) Why shouldn't this give us a way/*be* a way of understanding schizophrenic experience?

Well, of course, we can call it *understanding* if we want to. I am going to try to make it rather unattractive to do so. I am going to suggest that we ought not assimilate what it is that the objection recommends to understanding. Because I think that it would be a serious philosophical mistake to say that stream-of-consciousness writing (or for that matter psychoanalytic free association), even when efficaciously popularized beyond the avant garde, gave us a way of capturing the form of thinking, or of saying what thinking is truly like (including what it was like before the stream-of-consciousness stuff came onto the scene). We should be careful to avoid making similar mistakes in difficult cases of schizophrenic language. (And, not incidentally, I am concerned that Sass does not guard sufficiently against that danger.)

I wish then to question the idea that one can validly get an interpretation of a preexisting psychological phenomenon by means of finding a new 'apposite' way of 'describing'—of verbally 'depicting'—it. Let me illustrate my contentions here by reference to William Faulkner's superb use of a so-called stream-of-consciousness method, in the opening part of *The Sound and The Fury*. It is an example peculiarly appropriate for our present purposes, as will shortly become plain, in virtue of the strictly limited but nevertheless intriguing affinities between Faulkner's protagonist, Benjy, and (say) Daniel Paul Schreber. At this point I will quote extensively from the Wittgensteinian literary critic, James Guetti (1993, 86):

I want to take a case . . . of recognizing a text as "another language" . . . in which it may seem self-evident that a way of speaking is . . . "psychologically identifiable," and therefore apparently controlled by its connections with a reader's own intelligible vocabularies from beyond the text, when in fact as a language it takes much more dominion than that. The best single example I can give of this linguistic condition is from Faulkner's '*The Sound and the Fury*', Benjy's narrative:

. . . I went out the door and I couldn't hear them, and I went down to the gate, where the girls passed with their booksatchels. They looked at me, walking fast, with their heads turned. I tried to say, but they went on, and I went along the fence, trying to say, and they went faster. Then they were running and I came to the corner of the fence . . . and I held to the fence, looking after them and trying to say.

What Benjy is "trying to say" . . . is that he thinks he sees, or expects to see, or, more certainly, that he wants to see his sister Caddy, whom he used to meet on her way home from school; and he is trying as well to do something that he can never do, to talk to another human being. But what his "trying to say" amounts to, we also know, is a continuous loud and horrible bellowing. And . . . we know as well that Benjy now, at the age of thirty-three, is large, shambling, fat, drooling, and an "idiot."

But, as Guetti goes on to observe of this "idiot" Benjy, who "bellows," and who yet seems somehow to be the center of a slightly solipsistic (and odd, allegedly underdeveloped, sensitive), intelligence:

[What] seems most interesting is the way that Benjy's comparative incapacity . . . becomes his individual capacity and power. . . . [H]is inability to conceive of causal sequences enables him to notice a very great deal as it happens. . . . And his failures at "trying to say" . . . become his "saying" to a reader.

This effect depends . . . on Benjy's continuousness to a reader over a time What I am suggesting is that, sooner or later, a reader ceases to [regard Benjy's words] as the language of an "idiot": "Father . . . looked at us again. Then the dark came back, and he stood black in the door, and then the door turned black again. Caddy held me and I could hear us all, and the darkness, and something I could smell Then the dark began to go in smooth, bright shapes, like it always does, even when Caddy says that I have been asleep.

. . . [T]o understand the emotional force of Benjy's language, is to say that it somehow generalizes his case, and that his appeal is the appeal, and his language the words, of a "child." His vulnerability, which is equivalent to the fact that his wonderful imaginings must remain frustrated and potential, his perpetual innocence that will be hurt again and again . . . all underwrite his image as a child. And so one might say that Benjy's text . . . moves us . . . by connecting with what we already know about children.

Or by connecting with what we *think* we know. For what in fact do we know about such childhood? How do we know that experiences for children are so beautifully discrete and yet so synchronizable . . . , or that—when a child slept—"the dark began to go in smooth, bright shapes"? . . . I would suggest, then, that we do not recognize that Benjy is a "child" by extension from what we know about other children. If there is such a "recognition" here, it probably goes in the other direction: we know about other children by Benjy; he sets a standard; he is the child. Indeed, he so moves us because probably he is somehow more a "child" than any particular child could be. (1993, 87–88)

The last two sentences are crucial. Benjy is perhaps a paradigm, a *prototype*. In his language, something is exemplified more perhaps than it is ever found in the real world; and it is described in such a way that we now *have* a way for describing better that real world (or so, at any rate, we feel).

What happens as Benjy's narrative develops, I think, is rather like what Wittgenstein describes . . . when he says that "the same proposition may get treated at one time as something to test by experience, at another as a rule of testing" (*On Certainty*, 15). Benjy's language ceases to be dominated by the rules of the

grammars we bring to it; it becomes, for its duration, itself the dominating language. And the reason why this seems so remarkable is that it amounts, again, to a reversal of what we think we are doing with such narratives. For we at least begin by feeling that we "understand" them by placing them in some sort of comparative relation with rules and vocabularies of which we are assured; and yet, sooner or later, these narratives come to exceed such presumptions and to achieve a different kind of status. The character . . . becomes "right" to say what he says not because we can explain his speech "psychologically" . . . but because through the appeal of its sustained presence his language is transformed from a sort of "dialect" or merely local grammar *into the only way of talking*, into a ['language'] a reader must speak as he reads. (1993, 88–89).

As with Benjy, so with Schreber (or Wolfli, or Artaud): Do we really understand them, by analogy or extension from things we do understand? Or is it that eventually we hear what they are saying as sufficient unto itself? Like with much strong Modernist literature (e.g., some later Gertrude Stein, some 'L.A.N.G.U.A.G.E.' poetry; a fine example is the opening of J.H. Prynne's *Word Order* [1989]). More obviously even than in Benjy's case, we surely do not, I would want to claim, really *understand* extreme Modernist poetry, however good it is.

We must come to speak Benjy's language, rather than to continue to translate it from idiot talk into our own talk, if we are to be able to get anywhere with this text, to be able to *appreciate* it. Maybe this can be done with schizophrenia (and maybe with other severe mental conditions, such as Autism—as for instance the high-functioning, autistic Donna Williams's wonderful books—her extraordinary first-person account [1992, 1994]—may bring us to think). But I think actually that we should be extremely wary of the thought that any of this can wisely be thought of as getting us inside the head of another, if the mental life of that other is sufficiently drastically different from our own. If we think of Benjy's talk as like another language, we must not think of it as a fully decodable, interpretable language, even in principle.⁶ And that makes all the difference. We may hear or even 'speak' Benjy's 'language'—but we still, I want to say, do not *understand* it.

As Guetti holds, it is experiences of *language* that are in question here, experiences of grammatical effects; not simply communications, not just meaning, and signifying. Our everyday language, and certain linguistic items (e.g., ordinary utterances in foreign languages) that we can translate into it without any worrisome violence, without loss, involve sensical significations.

Whereas, like poetry—insofar as it is language that exposes to our view its own form, rather than allowing itself to be translated or paraphrased into everyday prose, into (for example) its alleged ‘meaning’ or its alleged ‘moral’—like poetry, discourse which must remain ‘another language’, such as Benjy’s, does not for us involve any ordinary signification (at least, not centrally, in terms of the features of it which are distinctive). Contrary to appearances, it does not make sense. And nor, ultimately, does the interesting and difficult portion of Schreber’s discourse (or that of other well-known sufferers from schizophrenia, such as Antonin Artaud or Renée), even in context.

We are led by Faulkner’s empathy and erudition—and perhaps by the decoding game he sometimes encourages the reader to engage in, the game of trying to identify what Benjy is actually talking about—to believe that we understand now the psychology of someone with a serious mental disturbance, or of the child. But, as Guetti asks: What do we really know of these things? Or rather: What does it mean to know of these things? I am not making the point that this is fiction; in fact, I have no doubt that, in its own way, Faulkner’s writing is more illuminating about real human beings’ minds than many a shelf’s load of psychology or psychiatry textbooks. But all we (in fact) have here is a ‘language’ we can now use to represent abnormal—or child—psychology; or, better, to give instances of it.

It might be objected that it is dangerous to assimilate the case of the child to that of the schizophrenic. This is surely true; finding schizophrenic thinking to be directly analogous to the alleged mode of thinking of children (and of primitive peoples) is a highly dubious legacy of psychoanalytical thinking on schizophrenia, and has rightly been thoroughly critiqued by Sass

(1992, 1994), among others. If pressed, I should for the sake of argument give up any claims I might seem to be making to the noncomprehensibility of the world of the child, and simply suggest that the morals of Guetti’s discussion do apply to the remote world—the non-world—of the chronically schizophrenic person. Strictly, (much of) that language is sound and fury, signifying nothing.⁷ One must do violence to that language to render its sentences into our own, into sentences that successfully signify, sentences that mean, sentences that have a use (as opposed to having various grammatical, psychological, and associative effects upon one). Insofar as one translates (say) Benjy’s sentences into our language, one strips away their literariness, their particularity, transforming them into our own pale reflections of them, finding ways of making sense of them such that they are no longer nonsensical or alien. We may want to have it both ways, but really we can have it neither: If Benjy’s language *is* in quite specific ways responsible to reality, if that is how coming to grips with it supposedly enables us to understand his psychology, then any translation of it into our language will eliminate that responsibility to reality, and will ensure that the project of understanding the reality of this abnormal psychology fails.

But if we *can* straightforwardly translate Benjy’s language and understand it and him thereby, then we did not need to understand his language its own terms to capture what it depicts, in the first place. In this latter case, understanding stream-of-consciousness writing would simply be an irrelevant distraction.

To switch for a moment to Heideggerian terminology (which carries with it still some of the very risks I have been pointing to!): we do not get any genuine understanding of something ontological—a different world, such as, someone might hold, Benjy has—through treating it as translatable, as ontic, as optimistic psychologists and psychiatrists tend to. The interpreting into terms that we understand (or translating) of ontologically different language, language that is other than sensical communicative discourse, is just not a good idea. Thus my reading of schizophrenic madness is not romantic. I am not saying

that madness is another world or another country. I am saying that, when sufficiently severe, and indeed if and when bearing a strong patina of rationality (*hyper-rationality* and *hyper-reflexivity*, again, are the terms Sass uses), it is not a world or country or land at all, but only the mirage of one.

One might in fact then with most profit say, that—when most successful—the stream-of-consciousness novel actually succeeded in generating a new paradigm for what we would come to regard as/count as expressing thoughts. My thought here is akin to that of Ian Hacking (both his important writings on regimes of truth and falsity and his work on the emergence of new possibilities for human being, for example, being a *multiple* [someone with Multiple Personality Disorder; see *Rewriting the Soul* (1995)]) and of Thomas Kuhn (see *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* [1970], on there being no criteria beyond the paradigm). But doesn't something become a new paradigm *because* we feel that it gets things right? Maybe, but so what? Because a brave new metaphor gets it right somehow, so far as we are concerned, does it follow that metaphors are always translatable? In suggesting *no* for an answer, I follow Guetti (and Donald Davidson).

When most successful, then, we should say that the stream-of-consciousness novel generated the powerful illusion that it was accurately expressing a previously existing but as yet ineffable phenomenon. Very approximately, à la Roland Barthes's *reality effect*, which concerns the generation of an effective appearance of realism, of expressing a preexistent reality, by means of subtle textual techniques (see *The Rustle of Language* [1986, 141ff]; see also Reed [1973], which partially anticipates Guetti in arguing for a non-realist rendering of Faulkner's language). That this could only be an illusion, in this case or in others like it (for grammar/language is not responsible to reality; only [some] statements are), we tend not to see.

Capturing and turning the forms of our thought⁸ into a content—even one to be gestured at—is not a possible project. No more vis-à-vis schizophrenia than vis-à-vis literature, or philosophy.

In conclusion, then, the would-be objection of the lesson I drew from *On Certainty* fails. The least misleading thing to say about cases of severe mental illness is probably that there can be no such thing as understanding them. (And then, of course, no such thing as misunderstanding them either. They just aren't candidates for understanding.) We have no criteria via which cognitively to evaluate them, and so whatever we attempt to say of them by way of affirmative characterization will be arbitrary, and in a way quite misleading.⁹

Is this not an anti-Wittgensteinian conclusion? Am I, for example, being overly narrow still, failing to treat *understanding* sufficiently as a family resemblance concept with a variety of different cases? Mustn't there be a sense in which a respectful, hermeneutic-ish, Wittgensteinian approach to this matter would involve us finding a way, perhaps some kind of indirect way, of describing correctly the experience of the sufferer from schizophrenia? Well, no. At least not for Wittgenstein himself. I would invite those who feel inclined still to disagree with me and to answer the above questions in the affirmative, to offer their interpretation of the following remark of Wittgenstein's, a remark precisely consonant, it seems to me, with the line of argument which I have pursued in this paper: "Suppose you say of the schizophrenic: he does not love, he cannot love, he refuses to love—what is the difference?!" (1980, 77)

The difference between saying these things of the ordinary person, is weighty. That a person refuses to love implies a kind of criticism of them not present in their being unable to love, for example. But Wittgenstein specifically rejects such discrimination, in the case of the schizophrenic. It does not matter which of these we say: there can be no such thing as getting schizophrenia right. You can call being able to say everything and nothing—being able to say whatever you like—understanding, if you wish! I would prefer to restrict the use of that term to contexts in which there is a reasonably clear distinction between understanding and not understanding someone. What we can be intelligibly said to understand in another, in the sense of under-

standing what their actions are, or understanding their motives for action, or empathetically understanding them, is (most of) the hurly-burly and variety of ordinary life. But most serious schizophrenia does not fall under that heading. It is better seen as the persistent semblance of another language—very much like the semblance of another language that we find in Wittgenstein’s private linguist, a philosopher subject to an illusion of sense, an illusion that his words, in the way he finds himself wishing to employ them, mean anything at all.

Getting Faulkner right involves seeing that his novel displays to us language which, ironically, cannot be translated or interpreted into sense without irreducible loss or garbling. An odd kind of garbling, admittedly: a garbling that inadvisedly turns nonsense into sense. We need to see Faulkner’s language clearly, as a language of paradox, of indeed nonsense masquerading beautifully as sense. We should try to see Faulkner’s work as exemplifying these Wittgensteinian—Guettian—points; and then we can see his art—his artifice—clearly, as the brilliant creation of an illusion of meaning, an illusion of sense. The illusion perhaps that we can make sense of the life-world of a young child, certainly of an idiot—or, I have argued, by (I hope) a justified extension, of a sufferer from chronic schizophrenia. If I am right, we can see Faulkner then—now—as an artist whose art bears among other things a very particular aspect: an exemplification of deflationary Wittgensteinian philosophy of psychopathology.

In sum, I urge upon the reader that s/he consider an option: that the most impenetrable cases of schizophrenia are not cases of a different form of life, but, despite appearances, of no form of life at all. This is an option that has not to date been even considered in the literature of/on psychopathology. I do not of course claim to have exhaustively established the truth of my suggestion. I claim only that it bears serious consideration—and *not* for scientific but rather for literary reasons.

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2. Ivan Leudar: One of Sass’s main rivals on the question of how to read the likes of Schreber is Ivan Leudar, from whom in the present paper I differ slightly from. Leudar With Thomas (2000) argue that voice hearers such as Schreber are continually engaged in mundane processes of reality testing, and are pragmatically dealing with their (bizarre) world. But the difference between myself and Leudar can be partly accounted for by pointing out that I aim to be dealing with some of the most extreme moments and aspects of schizophreniform delusions (by analogy to dream worlds and the world of the young child/idiot), moments where I believe that Leudar’s and Thomas’s otherwise powerful account reaches a limit, and gives out. <Q4>

NOTES

1. Louis Sass: For a basic outline of Sass’s work, consult Sass (1997). Of very great value also are his major work, *Madness and Modernism* (1992) and *The Paradoxes of Delusion* (1994), which is the piece of his most salient to the controversy of the present paper.

2. For argument to these conclusions, see Conant (1991), and the papers by Crary, Cerbone and Conant in Crary and Read’s *The New Wittgenstein* (2000). Extending the line of thinking of these authors, I am suggesting that seriously felt solipsism takes to such a pathologic extreme our rational modes of thinking that, inadvertently falling thereby into being a fantasy of a wholly other way of thinking, ‘it’ fails to be any kind of way of thinking at all.

3. Thomas Kuhn: One might with profit compare the function of paradigms in science according to Thomas Kuhn (see *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* [1970]) to that of paradigms according to Guetti, paradigms like Benjy. A thorough scientific revolution, such as the chemical revolution, yields (according to Kuhn) radically new paradigms of thinking, and thus produces a *deep* difficulty for scientists in understanding even their own past views. I am suggesting in the present paper that a more extreme version of the same process is at work in cases of radical literary innovation and artifice, of literary revolution—and that it afflicts the severely psychopathologic similarly. It is more extreme, because in these cases one comes to doubt whether there is even anything to understand on the other side of the revolutionary divide.

4. One might compare here the inclinations to speak in certain ways of metaphysically inclined philoso-

phers, which is exactly what Wittgenstein is referring to in *Philosophical Investigations*, paragraph 386 (cf. Diamond [2000] for a vital discussion on the process and limits of attempting to grasp [or effectively imagine] those inclinations [and those speakings]).

5. It is important to note that the scare quotes around words such as ‘internal,’ ‘inside,’ and ‘limits’ here are essential. They indicate that there is no proper contrast class to these terms as used in these philosophical contexts. There is no such thing as an ‘outside’ to the ordinary, only the fantasy of metaphysics and the reality of delusion or interminable confusion.

6. See the very opening of *The Sound and the Fury*. If one insists on translating Faulkner’s/Benjy’s turns of phrase such as “curling flower spaces” into English, the power of this ‘language’ is lost. We should think of its metaphoricity as *strong*, as live, as *untranslatable* except at the cost of losing its ‘grammatical’ or ‘representational’ *effect(s)*. The same is true of many of the ‘metaphors’ of schizophrenic language.

7. Or, more accurately still: meaning nothing, in the sense in which the word *meaning* is intimately tied to *use*. For detail on why MacBeth’s and Saussure’s word *signify* may tend to lead one astray hereabouts, see Read (2001b).

8. And likewise, it follows from the above, the forms of reality too. The reason why capturing the form of language or *thought* is likely to strike us as a more exciting project is, I think, simply that it is a newer one. (I hope to explore these matters in future work, especially on V. Woolf.)

9. These conclusions buttress those of my “On approaching schizophrenia through Wittgenstein” (2001a), a companion paper to the present paper in this regard.

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