Neuroses are Encapsulated Psychoses

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Psychoanalysts distinguish between psychopathologies that are ‘ego-syntonic’, meaning that the subject identifies with the viewpoint embodied in his symptoms and therefore does not see his symptoms *as* symptoms, and those that are ‘ego-dystonic’, meaning that the subject does not identity with the viewpoint embodied in his symptoms and therefore *does* see his symptoms as symptoms. Schizophrenia is ego-syntonic since the schizophrenic wholeheartedly believes that Martians are tapping his phone. OCD is ego-dystonic since, although a *part* of him believes that he will burn in hell if he doesn’t wash his hands after touching the door-knob, *he—*meaning his ego-proper---*does not* believe this, so that he is not taken in, as it were, by his own symptom.

The term ‘ego-syntonic disorder’ is more or less co-extensive with the term ‘psychosis’, and the term ‘ego-dystonic disorder’ is more or less co-extensive with the term ‘neurosis.’

My position now is that neurotic symptoms are bounded psychoses. I now think that, where neuroses are concerned, the subject *is* in fact taken in by his own symptoms—that, for example, the obsessive-compulsive *does* believe that he will burn in hell if he doesn’t wash his hands. The difference between obsessive compulsive and the schizophrenic is not that the one is, while the other is not, fooled by his own symptoms: they are both fooled.

The difference is that the obsessive-compulsive is psychotic about *facts* but not about *methods of reasoning.* The schizophrenic is psychotic about methods of reasoning and also about facts. And because the schizophrenic is psychotic with respect both to facts *and* methods of reasoning, he cannot bootstrap his way out of his symptoms. The obsessive compulsive, on the other, has the option of using his uncorrupted ratiocinative abilities to bootstrap his way out of his psychotic bubble.

What we call ‘neurosis’ is psychosis about specific facts, but not about the logical instruments used to judge relations between facts. What we call ‘psychosis’ is psychosis about both facts and the aforementioned logical instruments. Neurotic delusions are quite as psychotic as psychotic delusions; but neurotic delusions occur against a backdrop of inferential abilities that are largely uncorrupted by psychotic delusions, that serve as a liaisons between the subject and his own sanity. Psychotic delusions occur against a backdrop of inferential abilities that *are* corrupted by delusion and that, when the subject avails himself of them, in an attempt to extricate himself from his psychotic delusions, merely inflames and compounds those delusions.