

Family One · The Abbotts

MAYA is a tall, dark, attractive woman of twenty-eight. She is an only child. Until she was eight she lived with her mother and father, the manager of a general store. From then until fourteen she was an evacuee with an elderly childless couple and from fourteen to eighteen when she was first admitted to hospital, she was once again with her parents.

She has spent nine of her last ten years in West Hospital.

CLINICAL PERSPECTIVE

Maya's 'illness' was diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenia. It appeared to come out of the blue. A report by a psychiatric social worker based on interviews with her mother and father described the onset in the following way:

Patient did not seem to be anything other than normal in her behaviour until about a month before her admission to hospital. She had of course been worrying about her school work, but the parents were used to this, and from past experience regarded her fears as quite groundless. One afternoon she came home from school and told her parents that the headmistress wished her to leave the school. Parents were immediately worried as they knew this was not right. Further, the patient reiterated this on other occasions. She then said that she could not sleep, and shortly afterwards became convinced that burglars were breaking into the house. A sedative was prescribed but the patient at first refused to take this. One night when she did so, she sat bolt upright in bed, and managed to stay awake in spite of the drug. She then decided her father was poisoning her, and one day ran out of the house and told a neighbour that her father was trying to poison her. Parents eventually found her and brought her home. She did not seem frightened of her father and discussed the matter quite calmly with him, but refused to be convinced that he was not trying to get rid of

Sanity, Madness, and the Family

her. A doctor was called and advised that she have treatment immediately. Patient was more than willing to have treatment, and entered hospital as a voluntary patient.

Ten years later her parents gave us the same report.

In the past ten years her behaviour has given rise to clinical attributions that she had auditory hallucinations and was de-personalized; showed signs of catatonia; exhibited affective impoverishment and autistic withdrawal. Occasionally she was held to be 'impulsive'.

Expressed more phenomenologically, she experienced herself as a machine, rather than as a person: she lacked a sense of her motives, agency and intentions belonging together: she was very confused about her autonomous identity. She felt it necessary to move and speak with studious and scrupulous correctness. She sometimes felt that her thoughts were controlled by others, and she said that not she but her 'voices' often did her thinking.

In our account, as we are not approaching our study from a clinical but from a social phenomenological perspective, we shall not be able to compartmentalize our inquiry in terms of clinical categories. Clinical signs and symptoms will become dissolved in the social intelligibility of the account that follows.

What we are setting out to do is to show that Maya's experiences and actions, especially those deemed most schizophrenic, become intelligible as they are seen in the light of her family situation. This 'situation' is not only the family seen by us from without, but the 'family' as experienced by each of its members from inside.

Our fundamental question is: to what extent is Maya's schizophrenic experience and behaviour intelligible in the light of the praxis and process of her family?

STRUCTURE OF INVESTIGATION

Our picture of this family is based on the following interviews.

The Abbotts

<i>Interviews</i>	<i>Occasions</i>
Mother	1
Father	1
Daughter	2
Daughter and mother	29
Daughter and father	2
Mother and father	2
Mother, father, and daughter	8
	—
	45

This represents fifty hours' interviewing, of which forty were tape-recorded.

THE FAMILY SITUATION

Mr and Mrs Abbott appear quiet, ordinary people. When Maya was eighteen Mrs Abbott was described by a psychiatric social worker as 'a most agreeable woman, who appeared to be friendly and easy to live with'. Mr Abbott had 'a quiet manner but a kindly one'. He seemed 'a very sensible man, but less practical than his wife'. There did not appear to be much that he would not do for his family. He had excellent health, and impressed the interviewer as 'a very stable personality'.

Maya was born when her mother was twenty and her father thirty.

When his daughter was born, Mr Abbott had been reading of an excavation of a Mayan tomb. 'Just the name for my little girl', he thought.

Mother and father agreed that until sent away from home at eight Maya had been her daddy's girl. She would wake him early in the morning and they would go swimming. She was always hand-in-hand with him. They sat close together at table, and he was the one to say prayers with her last thing at night. They frequently went for long walks together.

Apart from brief visits home, Maya lived away from her parents from eight until the age of fourteen. When she came home then to live permanently with them, they complained

Sanity, Madness, and the Family

she was changed. She was no longer their little girl. She wanted to study. She did not want to go swimming, or to go for long walks with her father any more. She no longer wanted to pray with him. She wanted to read the Bible herself, by herself. She objected to her father expressing his affection for her by sitting close to her at meals. She wanted to sit further away from him. Nor did she want to go to the cinema with her mother. In the house, she wanted to handle things and to do things for herself, such as (mother's example) washing a mirror without first telling her mother.

These changes in Maya, mentioned by her parents retrospectively as the first signs of illness, seem to us to be ordinary expressions of growing up. What is of interest is the discrepancy between her parents' judgement of these developments and ours.

Maya conceived as her main difficulty, indeed her main task in life, the achievement of autonomy.

You should be able to think for yourself, work things out for yourself. I can't. People can take things in but I can't. I forget half the time. Even what I remember isn't true memory. You should be able to work things out for yourself.

Her parents appear to have consistently regarded with alarm all expressions of developing autonomy on Maya's part necessarily involving efforts to separate herself from them and to do things on her own initiative. Her parents' alarm remains unabated in the present. For example, her mother objected to her ironing without supervision, although for the past year she had been working in a laundry without mishap. Mr and Mrs Abbott regarded their daughter's use of her own 'mind' independently of them, as synonymous with 'illness', and as a rejection of them. Her mother said:

I think I'm so absolutely centred on the one thing – it's well, to get her well – I mean as a child, and as a – teenager I could always sort out whatever was wrong or – do something about it, but it – but this illness has been so completely em – our relations have been different – you see Maya is er – instead of accepting

The Abbotts

everything – as if I said to her, er, ‘Black is black’, she would have probably believed it, but since she’s ill, she’s never accepted anything any more. She’s had to reason it out for herself, and if she couldn’t reason it out herself, then she didn’t seem to take *my* word for it – which of course is quite different to me.

‘Since her illness’, as they put it, she had become more ‘difficult’. She did not ‘fit in’ as she had done. The hospital had made her worse in this respect, although Maya felt that it had helped her to ‘use her own mind’ more than before. Using one’s own mind entails of course experiencing for oneself generally. What to Maya was ‘using my own mind’, and ‘wanting to do things for myself’, was to her parents ‘forwardness’ and ‘brightness’.

Until eighteen Maya studied hard, and passed all her exams. She took refuge, as she said, in her books, from what she called her parents’ intrusions. Her parents’ attitudes became highly equivocal, at one and the same time proud and patronizing, hurt in themselves and anxiously concerned for her. They said she was very clever, even ‘too clever perhaps’. They thought she worked too hard. She was getting no enjoyment reading all the time, so she had to be dragged away from her reading. Her mother said:

We used to go to the pictures in those days and I used to say eh – and sometimes she’d say, ‘I don’t think I should go to the pictures tonight, Mum, I think I should do some homework.’ And then I’d say to her, ‘Oh well, I’m disappointed,’ or that I’d made up my mind to go or something like that, or, ‘Well, I’ll go on my own,’ and then she’d say, ‘All right, I will come.’ She really had to be forced to go out, most of the time.

When Maya said that her parents put difficulties in the way of her reading, they amusedly denied this. She insisted that she had wanted to read the Bible; they both laughed at the idea that they made this difficult for her, and her father, still laughing, said, ‘What do you want to read the Bible for anyway? You can find that sort of information much better in other books.’

We shall now consider more closely certain recurring

Sanity, Madness, and the Family

attributions made about Maya both by her parents and by psychiatrists.

For ten years she was described uniformly in psychiatric report after report as apathetic, withdrawn, lacking in affect, isolated, hostile, emotionally impoverished. Her parents also saw her in this way. She had been told by them so frequently since she was fourteen that she had no feelings, that one would have thought she would have been fairly inured to this attribution, yet she could still get flushed and angry when she was 'accused' of it. For her part, she felt that she had never been given affection, nor allowed to show affection spontaneously, and that it was exasperation or frustration on this score that was the reason for much of what was called her impulsiveness – for instance, the incident that had occasioned her readmission to hospital eight years earlier, when she was said to have attacked her mother with a knife.

MAYA: Well, why did I attack you? Perhaps I was looking for something, something I lacked – affection, maybe it was greed for affection.

MOTHER: You wouldn't have any of that. You always think that's sappy.

MAYA: Well, when did you offer it to me?

MOTHER: Well, for instance if I was to want to kiss you you'd say, 'Don't be sappy'.

MAYA: *But I've never known you let me kiss you.*

Maya made the point that her parents did not think of her, or 'see' her as 'a person', 'as the person that I am'. She felt frightened by this lack of recognition, and hit back at them as a means of self-defence. But this, of course, was quite bewildering to her parents, who could not grasp at any time any sense in this accusation. Maya insisted that her parents had no genuine affection for her because they did not know, and did not want to know, what she felt, and also that *she* was not allowed to express any spontaneous affection for *them*, because this was not part of 'fitting in'.

When Maya said that she had brightened up after having

The Abbotts

lost her feelings, her mother retorted, 'Well, you were too bright already'. This did not refer to any hypomanic quality about the girl, as there was none.

Another feature of her lack of feeling is illuminated by the issue of being taken seriously or not. As Maya said, her father

... often laughed off things that I told him and I couldn't see what he was laughing at. I thought it was very serious. Even when I was five, when I could understand, I couldn't see what he was laughing at. Both Father and Mother took sides against me.

I told Father about school and he used to laugh it off. If I told him about my dreams he used to laugh it off and tell me to take no notice. They were important to me at the time - I often got nightmares. He used to laugh them off. He played a lot with me as a child, but that's not the same.

Her mother complained to us that Maya did not want to understand her; her father felt the same way, and both were hurt that she would not tell them anything about herself.

Their response to this blow was interesting. They came to feel that Maya had exceptional mental powers, so much so that they convinced themselves *that she could read their thoughts*. For instance,

FATHER: If I was downstairs and somebody came in and asked how Maya was, if I immediately went upstairs, Maya would say to me, 'What have you been saying about me?' I said, 'Nothing.' She said, 'Oh yes you have, I heard you.' Now it was so extraordinary that unknown to Maya I experimented myself with her, you see, and then when I'd proved it I thought, 'Well, I'll take Mrs Abbott into my confidence,' so I told her, and she said, 'Oh don't be silly, it's impossible.' I said, 'All right, now when we take Maya in the car tonight I'll sit beside her and I'll concentrate on her. I'll say something, and you watch what happens.' When I was sitting down she said, 'Would you mind sitting the other side of the car. I can't fathom Dad's thoughts.' And that was true. Well, following that, one Sunday I said -

Sanity, Madness, and the Family

it was winter – I said, ‘Now Maya will sit in the usual chair, and she’ll be reading a book. Now you pick up a paper and I’ll pick up a paper, and I’ll give you the word and er . . .’ – Maya was busy reading the paper, and er – I nodded to my wife, then I concentrated on Maya behind the paper. She picked up the paper – her em – magazine or whatever it was and went to the front room. And her mother said, ‘Maya where are you going? I haven’t put the fire on.’ Maya said, ‘I can’t understand – ’ no – ‘I can’t get to the depth of Dad’s brain. Can’t get to the depth of Dad’s mind.’

Such experimentation has continued from before her first ‘illness’ to the present, and came to light only after this investigation had been under way for over a year. In this light, it is only with the greatest difficulty that Maya’s ideas of influence can continue to be seen as the effulgence of an individual pathological process, whether conceived as organic or psychic or both.

Clinically, she ‘suffered’ from ‘ideas of influence’. She recurred repeatedly to her feeling that despite herself she influenced others in untoward ways, and that others could and did influence her unduly, again despite her own struggles to counter this.

Now, in general, the nature of the reciprocal influences that persons do and can exert on one another is rather obscure. This is a realm where fantasy tends to generate fact. Certainly it would be easier to discuss Maya’s preoccupation with this issue if clearer ideas existed among the sane population on what does and can happen in this respect.

Specifically, it will be very relevant to us to know answers to the following questions.

What influence did her mother and father feel that Maya actually had on them?

What influence did they feel they could or did have, or ought to have had, on her?

What influence did they try to have on her?

What influence did they assume that one person could have

The Abbotts

on another, especially by action from a distance, and particularly by prayer, telepathy, or thought-control – the media that worried Maya most?

Without answers to such questions, no one could start to evaluate and elucidate Maya's 'delusions' of reciprocal influence. This principle necessarily holds, it seems to me, for every instance of such delusions.

In this case ideas of influence become socially intelligible when we remember that her parents *were* actively trying to influence her, that they believed that she could tell their thoughts, and that they experimented with her and denied to her that they did so. Further, while ascribing these remarkable powers to Maya, they believed, without any sense of contradiction, that she did not even know what she thought or did herself.

Maya's accusations that her mother and father were 'influencing' her in some way were 'laughed off' by them, and it is not surprising, therefore, that at home especially she was irritable, jumpy, and confused. It was only in the course of our investigation, as we have said, that they admitted to her what they had been doing.

MAYA: Well I mean you shouldn't do it – it's not natural.

FATHER: I don't do it – I didn't do it – I thought, 'Well I'm doing the wrong thing, I won't do it'.

MAYA: I mean the way I react would show it's wrong.

FATHER: And there was a case in point a few weeks back – she fancied one of her mother's skirts.

MAYA: I didn't – I tried it on and it fitted.

FATHER: Well they had to go to a dressmaker – the dressmaker was recommended by someone. Mrs Abbott went for it, and she said, 'How much is that?' The woman said, 'Four shillings' – Mrs Abbott said, 'Oh no, it must have cost you more than that'. So she said, 'Oh well, your husband did me a good turn a few years back and I've never repaid him'. I don't know what it was. Mrs Abbott gave more of course. So when Maya came home she said, 'Have

Sanity, Madness, and the Family

you got the skirt, Mum?' She said, 'Yes, and it cost a lot of money too, Maya' – Maya said, 'Oh you can't kid me – they tell me it was four shillings'.

MAYA: No, seven I thought it was.

FATHER: No, it was four you said – exactly – and my wife looked at me and I looked at her – So if you can account for that – I can't.

An idea of reference that she had was that something she could not fathom was going on between her parents, seemingly about her.

Indeed there was. When they were all interviewed together, her mother and father kept exchanging with each other a constant series of nods, winks, gestures, knowing smiles, so obvious to the observer that he commented on them after twenty minutes of the first such interview. They continued, however, unabated and denied.

The consequence, so it seems to us, of this failure by her parents to acknowledge the validity of similar comments by Maya, was that Maya could not know when she was perceiving or when she was imagining things to be going on between her parents. These open yet unavowed non-verbal exchanges between father and mother were in fact quite public and perfectly obvious. Much of what could be taken to be paranoid about Maya arose because she mistrusted her own mistrust. She could not really believe that what she thought she saw going on was going on. Another consequence was that she could not easily discriminate between actions not usually intended or regarded as communications, e.g. taking off spectacles, blinking, rubbing nose, frowning, and so on, and those that are – another aspect of her paranoia. It was just those actions, however, that were used as signals between her parents, as 'tests' to see if Maya would pick them up, but an essential part of this game the parents played was that, if commented on, the rejoinder would be an amused, 'What do you mean?' 'What wink!' and so on.

In addition to attributing to her various wonderful powers,

her parents added further to her mystification by telling her she could not, or did not, think, remember, or do what she did think, remember, and do.

It is illuminating to compare in some detail what she and her mother had to say about the supposed attack on her mother that had precipitated her readmission to hospital (see p. 40 above).

According to her mother, Maya attacked her for no reason. It was the result of her illness coming on again. Maya said she could not remember anything about it. Her mother continually prompted Maya to try to remember.

Maya once said, however, that she could remember the occasion quite clearly. She was dicing some meat. Her mother was standing behind her, telling her how to do things right, and that she was doing things wrong as usual. She felt something was going to snap inside unless she acted. She turned round and brandished the knife at her mother, and then threw it on the floor. She did not know why she felt like that. She was not sorry for what had happened, but she wanted to understand it. She said she had felt quite well at the time: she did not feel that it had to do with her 'illness'. She was responsible for it. She had not been told to act like that by her 'voices'. The voices, she said, were her own thoughts, anyway.

Our construction is that the whole episode might have passed unnoticed in many households as an expression of ordinary exasperation between daughter and mother.

We were not able to find one area of Maya's personality that was not subject to negations of different kinds.

For instance, she thinks she started to imagine 'sexual things' when she came home at the age of fourteen. She would lie in bed wondering whether her parents had sexual intercourse. She began to get sexually excited, and to masturbate. She was very shy, however, and kept away from boys. She felt increasingly irritated at the physical presence of her father. She objected to his shaving in the same room while she had breakfast. She was frightened that her parents knew that she

Sanity, Madness, and the Family

had sexual thoughts about them. She tried to tell them about this, but they told her *she did not have any thoughts of that kind*. She told them she masturbated *and they told her that she did not*. What happened then is of course inferred, but *when she told her parents in the presence of the interviewer that she still masturbated, her parents simply told her that she did not!*

As she recalls, when she was fifteen she began to feel that her father was causing these sexual thoughts, and that both parents were trying to influence her in some queer way. She intensified her studies, burying herself in her books, but she began to hear what she was reading in her head, and she began to hear her own thoughts. She was now struggling hard to think clearly any thoughts of her own. Her thoughts thought themselves audibly in her head: her vocal cords spoke her voice, her mind had a front and a back part. Her movements came from the front part of her mind. They just happened. She was losing any sense of being the agent of her own thoughts and words.*

Not only did both her parents contradict Maya's memory, feelings, perceptions, motives, intentions, but they made attributions that were themselves curiously self-contradictory, and, while they spoke and acted as though they knew better than Maya what she remembered, what she did, what she imagined, what she wanted, what she felt, whether she was enjoying herself or whether she was tired, this control was often maintained in a way which was further mystifying.

*For reasons given in the introduction, we are limiting ourselves very largely to the transactional phenomenology of these family situations. Clearly, here and in every other family, the material we present is full of evidence of the struggle of each of the family members against their own sexuality. Maya without doubt acts on her own sexual experience, in particular by way of splitting, projection, denial, and so on. Although it is beyond the self-imposed limitation of our particular focus in this book to discuss these aspects, the reader should not suppose that we wish to deny or to minimize the person's *action on himself* (what psychoanalysts usually call defence mechanisms), particularly in respect of sexual feelings aroused towards family members, that is, in respect of incest.

The Abbotts

For instance, on one occasion Maya said that she wanted to leave hospital, and that she thought her mother was trying to keep her in hospital, even though there was no need for her to be an in-patient any more. Her mother replied:

I think Maya is – I think Maya recognizes that – er – whatever she wanted really for her good, I'd do – wouldn't I – Hmm? (no answer) – No reservations in any way – I mean if there are any changes to be made I'd gladly make them – unless it was absolutely impossible.

Nothing could have been further from what Maya recognized at that moment. But one notes the many mystifying qualifications in the statement. Whatever Maya wanted is qualified most decisively by 'really' and 'for her own good'. Mrs Abbott, of course, was arbiter (i) of what Maya recognized, (ii) of what Maya 'really' wanted, in contrast to what *she* might *think* she wanted, (iii) of what was for her own good, (iv) of what was a reservation or a change, (v) of what was possible.

Maya sometimes commented fairly lucidly on these mystifications. But this was much more difficult for her to do than for us. Her difficulty was that she could not know when to trust or mistrust her own perceptions and memory or her mother and father.

The close investigation of this family reveals that her parents' statements to her about her, about themselves, about what they felt she felt they felt, and even about what could directly be seen and heard, could not be trusted.

Maya *suspected* this, but her parents regarded just such suspicions as her illness, and they told her so. She often therefore doubted the validity of her own suspicions: sometimes she denied delusionally what they said, sometimes she invented a story to cling to, for instance, that she had been in hospital when she was eight – the occasion of her first separation from them.

It is not so surprising that Maya tried to withdraw into her own world, although feeling at the same time most painfully that she was not an autonomous person. However, she felt

Sanity, Madness, and the Family

that in order to win some measure of separateness from her parents, she required to cultivate what she called 'self-possession'. This had various ramifications.

If I weren't self-possessed I'd be nowhere, because I'd be mixed up in a medley of other things.

As we have seen, however, it was just this attempt at autonomy that her parents saw as her 'illness', since it entailed that she did not 'fit in' with them, and was 'difficult', 'forward', 'too bright', 'too proud', and found fault with them.

Maya tried to explain herself in these terms:

I emphasize people's faults to regain my self-possession.

I can't fit in properly with people: it's not pride.

Mother is always picking on me. She's always getting at me. She's always trying to teach me how to use my mind. You can't tell a person how to use their mind against their will. It has always been like that with Mother. I resent it.

But at other times she doubted the validity of this impression. She said:

She doesn't pick on me, but that's how I look at it. That's how I react to it. I've got to calm myself. I always feel I've got to pick back at her – to stand up and get my own back – get back my self-possession.

She would feel that her mother and father were forcing their opinions on her, that they were trying to 'obliterate' her mind. But she had been taught to suppose that this was a mad thing to think, that this was what her 'illness' was.

So, she sought temporary refuge in her own world, her private world, her shell. To do this, however, was to be 'negative', in her parents' jargon: 'withdrawn', in psychiatric parlance.

When she was not putting up as belligerent a self-defensive front as she could muster, Maya would admit that she was very unsure of her own faculties. Things were not always real.

The Abbotts

I was never allowed to do anything for myself so I never learned to do things. The world doesn't seem quite real. If you don't do things then things are never quite real.

Change disturbed her precarious sense of identity.

I don't know how to deal with the unexpected. That's why I like things neat and tidy. Nothing unexpected can happen then.

But this neatness and tidiness had to come from herself, not be imposed by her parents' 'correctness' or 'precision'.

I used to think it a threat when I was younger, when I didn't have the freedom to act otherwise, but I can act otherwise now: but their correctness makes me want to understand why they are so correct, why they do things as they do, and why I am like I am.

She repeatedly disclaimed any feelings of her own, and any interest in other people's feelings.

Mother is a person that I lived with. I don't feel any more strongly than that. If something happened to her I should miss her and I should keep on thinking about her, but it wouldn't make any difference to the way I go on. I haven't any deep feelings. I'm just not made that way.

But she certainly knew what fear was; for instance, when an aunt shouted at her recently.

I felt just - I've often seen the cat shrink and it felt like that inside me.

She herself disclaimed being the agent of her own thoughts, largely, it seems, to evade criticism and invalidation.

I don't think, the voices think.

They echoed her reading or they made 'criticisms' of people she was terrified to make in her own person.

Just as not she but the voices thought, so not she but her body acted.

The whole lot is out of my control.

She had given up trying to 'make out' what her parents or anyone else was up to.

Sanity, Madness, and the Family

I can only see one side of the question – the world through my eyes and I can't see it through anyone else's eyes, like I used to.

This repudiation of any desire to 'put herself into' others was partly a defensive tactic, but it was also an expression of the fact that she was genuinely at a loss.

I find it hard to hold down a job because I don't know what is going on in other people's minds, and they seem to know what I'm thinking about.

I don't like being questioned on anything because I don't always know what other people are thinking.

I can't make out your kind of life. I don't live in your world. I don't know what you think or what you're after, and I don't want to (addressing her mother).

Her parents could see Maya's attempts at 'self-possession' only as due to 'a selfish nature', 'greed', 'illness', or 'lack of feeling'.

Thus when Maya tried to get into her own shell, to live in her own world, to bury herself in her books (to use her expressions), her mother and father felt this, as we have seen, as a terrible blow. The only time in our interviews when Mrs Abbott began to cry was when, having spoken of her own mother's death, she said that Maya did not want to understand her, because she was only interested in her own problems.

Mrs Abbott persistently reiterated how much she hoped and prayed that Maya would remember anything if it would help the doctors to get to the bottom of her illness. But she felt she had to tell Maya repeatedly that she (Maya) could not 'really' remember anything, because (as she explained to us) Maya was always ready to pretend that she was not really ill.

She frequently questioned Maya about her memory in general, in order (from her point of view) to help her to realize that she was ill, by showing her at different times either that she was amnesic, or that she had got her facts wrong, or that she only imagined she remembered what she thought she remembered because she had heard about it from her mother or father at a later date.

The Abbotts

This 'false' but 'imaginary' memory was regarded by Mrs Abbott with great concern. It also worried and confused Maya.

Mrs Abbott finally told us (not in Maya's presence) that she prayed that Maya would never remember her 'illness' because she (Mother) thought it would upset her (the daughter) to do so. Indeed, she felt this so strongly, that it would be 'kindest' if Maya never remembered her 'illness', even if it meant she had to remain in hospital!

A curious and revealing moment occurred when she was speaking of how much it meant to her that Maya should get well. Mrs Abbott had said that for Maya to get 'well' would mean that she would once more be 'one with her'. She usually spoke of her devotion to Maya as laying claim to gratitude from her, but now she spoke differently. She had been saying that maybe Maya was frightened to 'get all right'. She recalled a 'home truth' a friend had given her recently about her relation to Maya.

She said to me, you know, 'Well, you can't live anyone's life for them - you could even be punished for doing it' - And I remember thinking, 'What a dreadful thing to think,' but afterwards I thought she might be right. It struck me very forcibly. She said to me, 'You get your life to live, and that's *your* life - you can't and you mustn't live anybody's life for them.' And I thought at the time, 'Well, what a dreadful thing to think.' And then afterwards I thought, 'Well, it's probably quite right'.

This insight, however, was fleeting.

In the foregoing we have examined various 'signs' and 'symptoms' that are almost universally regarded in the psychiatric world as 'caused' by a disease, i.e. an organic pathological process, probably largely determined by genetic-constitutional factors, which destroys or impairs the organism's capacity to experience and to act in various ways.

In respect of depersonalization, catatonic and paranoid symptoms, impoverishment of affect, autistic withdrawal and auditory hallucinations, confusion of 'ego boundaries', it

Sanity, Madness, and the Family

seems to us, in this case, more likely that they are the outcome of her inter-experience and interaction with her parents. They seem to be quite in keeping with the social reality in which she lived.

It might be argued as regards our historical reconstructions that her parents might have been reacting in an abnormal way to the presence of an abnormal child. The data hardly support this thesis. Her mother and father reveal plainly, *in the present*, that what they regard most as symptoms of illness are what we regard as developing personalization, realization, autonomy, spontaneity, etc. On their own testimony, everything points to this being the case in the past as well. Her parents felt as stress not so much the loss but the development of her self.

Appendix

List of some of the disjunctive attributions and perspectives of mother, father, and daughter, most but not all of which have been discussed above. (Condensed from tape-recordings.)

<i>Daughter's View</i>	<i>View of Mother and Father</i>
She said that:	Parents said that:
Blackness came over her when she was eight.	It did not. Her memory is at fault. She was imagining this. This showed a 'mental lapse'.
She was emotionally disturbed in the years eight to fourteen.	She was not.
She started to masturbate when she was fifteen.	She did not.
She masturbates now.	She does not.
She had sexual thoughts about her mother and father.	She did not.
She was worried over her examinations.	She never worried over examinations because she always passed them, and so she had no need to worry. She was too clever and worked too hard. Besides, she could not have worried because they would have known.
Her mother and father tried to stop her reading.	Nonsense: <i>and</i> She had to be torn away from her books. She was reading too much.
Her mother and father were trying to influence her in some ways.	Nonsense: <i>and</i> Attempts to influence her through prayer, telepathy, thought-control.
She was not sure whether they could read her mind.	They thought they knew her thoughts better than she did.
She was not sure whether she could read their minds.	They felt she had telepathic powers, etc.
She could remember the 'attack' on her mother quite clearly but could not explain it.	She could not remember it.

Sanity, Madness, and the Family

Daughter's View

She was responsible for it.

Her mother was responsible for her being sent away as a result of this episode.

Her parents said they wanted her to get well, but they did not want her to get well.

Getting well was equivalent to: understanding why she attacked her mother; being able to use her own mind with self-confidence.

If you are not allowed to do things yourself things become unreal.

She could not always be sure whether she imagined feelings, or whether she really did have them.

She did not know why she had nightmares.

View of Mother and Father

She was not responsible for it. She was ill. It was part of her illness that she said she could remember this, and that she said she was responsible for it.

This was not so. She (mother) did not even know she was going to hospital when the doctor drove them both away in his car.

It was her illness that made her say things like that.

There is nothing for her to understand. Her illness made her do it.

Since she has been ill Maya has been much more difficult - i.e.:

- (i) she wanted to do things herself without first asking or telling them.
- (ii) she did not take their word for anything. She tried to make up her own mind about everything.
- (iii) she tried to remember things even in her childhood. And if she could not remember, she tried to imagine what happened.

She should forget them.

'I don't think dreams are any part of me. They are just things that happen to me.'

(Mother)