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The Paradoxes of Delusion: Wittgenstein, Schreber and the Schizophrenic Mind

By Louis A. Sass

Cornell University Press, United States, 1995. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Reprint. 224 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Insanity - in clinical practice as in the popular imagination - is seen as a state of believing things that are not true and perceiving things that do not exist. Most schizophrenics, however, do not act as if they mistake their delusions for reality. In a work of uncommon insight and empathy, Louis A. Sass shatters conventional thinking about insanity by juxtaposing the narratives of delusional schizophrenics with the philosophical writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein. In the formative years of psychiatry Freud, Bleuler, and Jaspers all studied Daniel Paul Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* as a model of psychotic thought. Sass provides a nuanced interpretation of Schreber's *Memoirs* in the context of Wittgenstein's analysis of philosophical solipsism. A dauntless critic of the illusions of philosophy, Wittgenstein likened the speculative excesses of traditional metaphysics to mental illness. Sass observes that many of the intellectual diseases that Wittgenstein discerned - diseases involving detachment from social existence and practical concerns, and exaggerated processes of abstraction and self-consciousness - have striking affinities with the symptoms of schizophrenia. Like the philosophical...

Reviews

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