
[75] ***The Linguistic Psychosis of Karl Tuczek's Patient Frau M.***

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In 1921 the neurologist Karl Gustav Tuczek (1890-1931) published his account of Frau M., who had been committed to a mental hospital for "querulous paranoid dementia", manifested particularly in her linguistic production. One aspect of Frau M.'s utterances attracted the attention of Kurt Goldstein (1878-1965): her references to a bird as *le lied* (le song), to summer as *le heiß* (the hot) and to a cellar as *le spinne* (the spider). Goldstein wrote about this in a 1944 publication that received international attention, and was instrumental in his successful advocacy of frontal lobotomy as a treatment for schizophrenia. By Goldstein's analysis, Frau M. displayed the most typical linguistic symptom of schizophrenia: an overuse of "concrete" rather than "abstract" words. Surprisingly, Goldstein gave no attention to the French-German language mixture of the utterances. By Tuczek's original account, she became obsessed with her son's education, and specifically with his elementary French lessons. It is convenient to ignore this if one is cherry-picking examples to promote a theory of concrete language in schizophrenia, and wants to make it appear that identifying a bird as *le lied* is effectively the same symptom shown by another patient diagnosed as schizophrenic on account of failing to name the colour of objects as the "abstract" green rather than the "concrete" emerald green or taupe. Would Goldstein have described Frau M.'s language in terms of concreteness if this had not already been established as a trendy diagnosis at the time? Song, hot and spider are no more concrete than bird, summer and cellar. Goldstein also neglects to mention that Frau M. identifies a song as *le vogel* (bird). From Tuczek's case history of Frau M. it is unclear whether she was dangerously ill or just a nuisance to her neighbours and her son's teachers. But the illness of Goldstein's own patient, based on the colour-sorting test, is still less clear. Goldstein locates the pathology in schizophrenics foregoing their natural role as the active agent of language and thought. This explanation connects in intriguing ways to the question of the Subject within the structuralism which was developing in linguistics (and beyond) at the time, sometimes with significant reference to Goldstein's work.