Schizophrenia: Senses, Sensations, and Sense

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This "participant-observation" study of schizophrenia in its present form resulted from the correspondence of the author with the eminent anthropologist, Anthony F.C. Wallace, who believes that schizophrenia is biochemically precipitated and maintained and that hereditary predisposition is common. The author believes that many sections of the two books by Prof. Wallace cited in the short list of references will be of value to those attempting to understand the schizophrenic experience and its social and cultural implications.

In 1971, after nearly eight years of jiving on that strange level of reality which I now know comes under the heading of schizophrenia, I decided to ask of myself the questions I thought doctors should have been asking of me all along rather than brushing aside the few questions about physical symptoms which I had asked. My aim was to determine what, within myself, was causing the feeling of somehow being cut off from reality, of meaninglessness, as well as some of the more easily recognized strange physical sensations. I kept a notebook, followed leads, practiced little "experiments," listed symptoms, and then categorized my findings.

My conclusions at the end of the observation period were that all of the sense perceptions had been affected, that a somatic sense of identity should be included with other sense perceptions, that "schizophrenia" may well be runaway sensation in itself, and that a great many puzzling symptoms were connected with circulatory problems.

My "schizophrenic" period lasted from early in 1964 to early 1972. It was precipitated by a period of severe stress, a

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[1] A pseudonym. December, 1973.

family crisis. I clearly recognized the crisis and my own limitations, and when the crisis period was over. However, something irreversible appeared to have happened to my body. The change, whatever it was, was accomplished in about three weeks beginning about five days after the first shock. I could not eat or sleep and went without sleep for four days and nights at one point. The primary feeling was of being drugged or poisoned. I was not paranoid; I knew that I was not being either drugged or poisoned. The feeling was also similar to having a very high fever or living on the borderland between waking and sleeping or what I have read about the feelings of shock.

In 1965, a year after the precipitating crisis, I had electroshock treatment for about three weeks. This did nothing except to give me a partial amnesia which neither I nor my family had been warned about. Later, in 1965, I was diagnosed "schizophrenic" by a second psychiatrist, possibly on the basis of the previous shock treatment. I was not told of this diagnosis until 1968 by a third psychiatrist who disagreed with it.

By 1971 I had seen five psychiatrists, usually for close to a year each time. This was not because I went from psychiatrist to psychiatrist, but because the family moved frequently. In one case I was discharged as "having come a long way." I was still seeing the last of these when I decided to find out for myself the problem, or problems. Following are the results of my observation period and analysis made in 1971, together with comments made in 1973 after having learned about Orthomolecular psychiatry and having been tested and treated and feeling well for over a year.

SENSES

Sight

1971: Change in vision was the first change in sense perception which I was aware of in 1964. My eyes were suddenly very light-sensitive, to the point that I could not go outside comfortably during the day without dark glasses. I saw the colors of the grass, flowers, and sky as sharper, more vivid. Reds, yellows, and oranges actually hurt my eyes inside the house or out. In spite of this heightened perception, I could not seem to focus my eyes correctly. I thought perhaps I had been gazing into space too much. If that was it, I still could not focus for proper distance. Even yet, in spite of glasses, I still get a sense of double vision in either eye—like looking with both eyes past my finger held out at arms' length, except that the double images are not that far apart. This has not interfered with depth perception for some reason. I guess I am still seeing around things.

My eyes seem to "stop" motion a little, something like seeing by strobe light. If I wave my hand from side to side at arms' length, I get a series of impressions, not a blur. This does not hold true of an object moving at some distance.

Eye movements appear to be more jerky. I noticed this first only a year or so ago when I had trouble proofreading stencils at the office. I almost had to take it a letter at a time. I have always been a fast reader, but now I think I read even faster, something like skimming in jerks, what I understand fast-reading courses try to teach people to do. I have trouble if I do not understand a sentence, whether it is because of a typographical error, because it was poorly written, or just that I did not understand. Again, I almost have to block off a word at a time.

It used to be that I loved walking through fabric shops. Just the colors, the patterns, the textures pleased me, were enjoyable in themselves. I felt somewhat the same about displays of glass objects of different colors, shapes, and sizes. Now both leave me cold, worse than cold, because I remember when just gazing at such things gave me a lift. Now I feel sad, lonely, hurt that they do so no longer and I hurry past the shops unless I need to buy something.

There seems to be a thin sheet of very transparent glass between me and the rest of nature, or perhaps it is more like a science-fiction force field. I know that nothing is there, but something is cutting me off from experiencing as I did before. This is worst in a natural setting, in the garden at home, a park, in the mountains where there isn't a lot of glass and are no artificial objects. Again I feel a deep sense of loss because I know no one person or thing is doing it.

1973: Sight is the last of the sensory problems to clear up. I still see double with one eye, still read somewhat jerkily, but have less trouble going back over something. However, the "sheet of glass/ "force field," or whatever, which gave me a feeling of being cut off, a sort of feeling of unreality, is gone. It appears now that while there was some change in the sense organs themselves, or what they registered, the main "abnormal" sensation stemmed from it, being purely local. I saw with my eyes, it registered in my brain, but I was missing other sensations, particularly in the body cavity, but also "all-over" sensations like a "thrill of pleasure," only less pronounced. I had figured this out to a certain extent in 1971 and was very aware when the missing sensations returned with treatment in 1972—as I was with most missing sensations.

Hearing

1971: In Hawaii we went to a concert where a simple Mozart melody came through to me like three rock pieces played at the same time, yet I could hear the melody, could have repeated it, and could have picked it out on a piano. Music or sound is generally unpleasant now. Sounds have something of a hollow tone to them. Sharp sounds and high notes have a greater impact than they used to. This is similar in effect to the effect consciously used in headache commercials with a "ping, ping, ping" or a discordant lasting sound that rises and falls with a spinning image of some sort used on TV. Eerie music as used to set a mood for a movie goes right through me, becomes a part of me, whereas the music that is supposed to soothe does not. Sounds startle me more, loud noises are louder. Low rumbling noises are soothing, particularly when they are accompanied by vibration as when riding in a car.

I have no difficulty hearing, understanding what is said, detecting the source from which a sound comes. Conversation is really the easiest for me since I am listening to what is said, not just the tones it is said in. Sometimes, though, my own voice sounds hollow to me, something like "stage fright" when you had better have memorized the opening paragraph because it won't be **your** voice you hear coming out, especially if you are using a microphone after not having used one for some time.

There is a humming, buzzing, in my ears (head?), the exact tone and volume of cicada-like insects. I have compared this both in Hawaii and in Virginia with the actual insects. It is exactly the same, yet I can tell which is inside and which is outside. It is never very loud and mostly I can ignore it except when I am trying to go to sleep.

1973: I still get the buzzing occasionally, usually with a headache. For the rest, some sensations were intensified (high sharp noises), others dulled somewhat. Here, more than with visual sensations, I could feel an evening-out and feel actual vibrations accompanied by somatic sensations, again in the body cavity in particular as normality returned.

Taste

Everything tastes like sawdust. Actually I can tell the difference between tastes; salt does not taste like sugar, meat does not taste like cereal, beans and peas taste right for beans and peas, but it might as well all be sawdust for all the enjoyment I get out of eating. I don't want to eat much in the first place. I have to force myself to eat, take advantage of the few times I am actually hungry, try to eat a balanced diet in case I ever want my body again. Something seems to be missing. This is also a part of the problem with seeing and hearing, but some colors and lights and some sounds are actually painful. There is nothing painful about eating, nothing nauseates me or tastes really bad. It is just dreary, and cooking has become a real chore. Even gourmet meals in the best restaurants are enjoyable only because I don't have to cook them or clean up afterwards. The food itself is just there. I miss the time when the odors from a neighbor's barbecue made me ravenous, when to smell was almost to taste. It is almost like having a bad cold when nothing tastes or smells right.

Smell

1971: Smell and taste are so closely bound up that to be missing something in one appears to mean missing something in the other. There is mostly just a dulling of smell, bad things smell bad, good things good, but not as bad or not as good as they used to. Smelling a flower used to make me want to draw the fragrance clear down to my toes. Now I can't; it doesn't seem to get past my nose. A rose smells like a rose, a violet like a violet, and all perfume smells like vanilla extract although I can tell the difference one from the other. I get no nostalgia from smells as I used to.

Taste and Smell 1973: These were the most easily recognized when normalcy returned and appear to be very directly due to sensations all along the throat into the stomach, upper part of the mouth, and even into the sinuses and ears. I could practically feel little taste buds or nerve endings or whatever turns it on again, like little Christmas tree lights.

Sense of Time

1971: This is getting better. At first I could not remember what year it was, let alone month or day. I had a terrible time writing checks. When I awoke, I would not know if it were from a night sleep or an afternoon nap. In this world of clocks and calendars with spaces to write on, I could compensate and just keep checking. I still have to check the calendar often to know what day it is and what I have to do today. There was never much problem about hours and minutes, blocks of time in which I was doing something.

Time 1973: I have not even thought about this for a long time, had no feeling of change. The difference is that now I am surprised if I don't know, especially if I take a nap and wake up disoriented as to time.

Touch

1971: Trying to distinguish the difference between the sense of touch now and before has been very puzzling (where the difference in sight is frightening). My skin sensation seems to be about the same (tactile sensation?) although perhaps a little dulled like taste and smell. I can run my finger lightly along my arm and raise "goose bumps" and feel the slightly itchy or tingly sensation that goes with them. I get a different sensation, that of electricity, sometimes when I run my fingers lightly over skin, satin, polished wood. I think it really is electricity of some sort. It is exactly the same as I used to get from a metal lamp with a slight leak, not enough to shock, just enough to vibrate a little. I do this at night-run my band along the headboard of the bed when I am reading. Mosquito bites itch, blisters hurt but "pinch me, see if I am real" feels wrong. Does this mean that I am not here, that I am dreaming? Yet I feel the pinch. I have called this "numbness of middle feeling," or "lack of middle sensation." It seems to have to do with my muscles. I can pinch a very small bit of skin and "ouch." I can punch my arm until I can feel it against the bone, which hurts, but if I pinch a large fold of muscle, nothing, or almost nothing. Is this merely tension? I don't feel tense. I flex my arm muscle. That is muscular tension. I relax it. I pinch both ways, tensed and relaxed: same feel from within my arm, or rather, same lack of feeling. The heroine of **I Never Promised You a Rose Garden** burned her arm with a cigarette without feeling it. I know it would hurt me if I tried it, but not enough, not in the right way. This was the only place where I identified with the girl on the psychiatric ward in the book which the psychiatrist told me to read for her idea of schizophrenia, after she told me I had once been diagnosed as schizophrenic and I asked what schizophrenia really is. No wonder I shelved the idea.

This "middle sensation" difference seems to have something to do with a change in the quality of pain. Pain is dulled, but more intense. What I picture happening inside is similar to what I see happen with a gnat bite (which I am allergic to). The bite merely stings or itches a little at first, then grows. It can swell up a leg or the side of my face. Any pain now seems to do the same thing. First there is a small pain, then all other pain seems attracted to it. That almost feels good at first since I usually have so much generalized minor pain. Then it spreads until my whole body feels the gnat bite, the bee sting, the pain inside wherever it is, whatever caused it. Sometimes the pain becomes like a gigantic toothache filling my body. I want to scream and feel that if I did I would never stop. Aspirin helps, but not for long. I take more each year trying to limit it to 10 a day. And nothing shows. Sometimes I wish I would break my leg or something that people, including doctors, could see and believe.

Touch and Middle Sensation 1973: Normal sensations here returned along with other missing sensations early in the treatment. I can scarcely remember what I was describing here. There is no feeling of "electricity," something I try to reproduce from time to time running my fingers along the wood of the headboard. If I wet my finger and press hard enough, I do get a vibration. It might have been just an increased sensitivity in the nerve endings, but I don't really believe so. There is something more to this "electricity" thing.

I did break a toe this summer (after wishing I would break something for eight years without doing it—so much for wish fulfillment). The toe felt broken and my foot swelled, but pain radiated up from the break and never did go farther than shooting pains up to my knee when I had walked too much.

Sense of Identity

This is primarily somatic, I have decided, and belongs with other sense perceptions.

1971: My first realization that I had lost some sort of sense of identity was in 1964 about two months after the break, breakdown, whatever it should be called. I was reading Erich Fromm's **The Art of Loving,** going along with what he said, seeing various people, including myself, in some of his neurotic forms of love, agreeing with his definition of love as being as concerned about another person's well-being as your own (although that does not necessarily feel like the emotion "love" to me). He suggested that the person relax and say: "Me, me, me." I was not sitting up at the time as I realized I should be when I reread that section a short time ago. (Sitting up may be important. I tried Transcendental Meditation after I was already well along in treatment for the physical problems. I tried the “mantra,” then “Jesus,” then "Buddha," then "myself." As long as I put the accent on the last syllable, it worked as well with one as another.) However, in 1964 I tried it in bed. I could not relax, although I used to relax a finger or toe at a time on the infrequent occasions I had trouble going to sleep, so I went on to the next step. I said "me," but there was no me. There was an "I." I went through the names I have had and been called. I went through all of my roles present and past. I stated things I did and did not believe. These things were all there, all a part of me, but there was no "me" standing alone. It was terrifying. I did not try it again until a few weeks ago when I was trying to find out what the sheet of glass was between me and the rest of nature.

I had been concentrating on a tree which I found easier to "identify" with than to experience as I once had. The harder I tried, the more I wondered what it felt like to be a tree. Then one morning I awoke after a rare good night's sleep and was lighting a cigarette with my morning Sanka when I glanced out at the tree. I was "experiencing" it in the same way I had experienced the world before I was ill or started living on this strange level of reality. I checked quickly to find the difference. It did not matter if I stared or half shut my eyes or just glanced out the window. Something was right. I was very relaxed, especially the usually tense muscles at the back of my neck and shoulders. My stomach also had a warm feeling, a good feeling, just about the place where I frequently had acid indigestion. Suddenly I also realized that I had the "me" feeling again as well. It was a matter of a somatic sense of identity.

My reactions were mixed: a sense of elation and having discovered the "key to the universe," a feeling of being let down because it was so simple, and a feeling of incredulity at all those learned books on the university library shelves dealing with identity, ego, id, self, the soul.

1973: Loss of "identity" was no longer something to fear once I had consciously experienced "me-ness" again, although I soon lost the feeling of that one morning in 1971. I decided that my "ego," "self," "soul," or whatever, might well be the proper interaction of thyroid, pancreas, adrenals, other endocrine glands—something neurosensory, and that we have cut ourselves off too much from our animal natures in our intoxication with the human "mind."

Diagnosis in 1972 showed that I had a pancreas problem, and a slight thyroid deficiency, and that my malabsorption problem included only minimal HCI in my stomach to aid in the digestion of food even after treatment for a year. What I had thought was "acid indigestion" (child of my TV culture) may have been just the opposite since all the B vitamins and C are acids and I had no more indigestion after I started taking them in massive doses.

The somatic sense of identity returned with the return of other missing sensations with treatment. Since I was aware that something was missing in the area of vital organs, I was very aware of sensations returning in the first few weeks of treatment. This can't be described as well as the feeling of returning taste sensations in the back of my throat and down my throat into the stomach. It was rather an all-over "coming alive" feeling in the body organs as elsewhere, but somehow more concrete, more solid feeling than in arms or legs, for instance. 'Now I am just me again, and that is enough. I was successful in my various roles while I was sick, but that wasn't enough. I guess one could say the problem wasn't with my "self" but with myself, me, the individual with an inner ecology.

SENSATIONS

WEIRD SENSATIONS

Electricity

1971: When there is no pain, I often feel as though I am full of electricity. It is a bit like a mild electric shock coursing through my body. I feel almost as though I could hold a light bulb in my hand and make like the Statue of Liberty with no wires or batteries. Or I feel like a lot of energy is building up, but I can't push the "on" button which would make it available for getting things done. I have to push myself, . not the button. This is connected with the feeling of a slight electric shock when I run my hand over a smooth surface. I think I may have more "static electricity" than before, nylon clothes clinging and that sort of thing, but this is hard to tell: it might be just in dry weather while the feeling of being full of electricity can be at any time. I do not feel pain and "electricity" at the same time. I have considered this in terms of "tension," "stress," "anxiety," which must mean something other to the observer because none of the words bandied about are descriptive in the least. This is emotionally neutral unless one is thinking in terms of "in Tier power" or something similar. I do think it could have something to do with "faith healing," "laying on of hands," and the like. It does seem that there could be something useful done with it.

Not necessarily connected with the general feeling of electricity is the little generator at the top of my spine which I have the feeling is sometimes radiating electricity. A such times it is sore to touch. 1973: I can only remember that it did feel that way, not how it felt. It does make me wonder about acupuncture and "reversing the flow of energy." If I had not been able to find a doctor who knew something about biochemistry, I think I would have tried acupuncture had it been available. Massage helped with this feeling. Exercise helped at the time, but did not last—similar to aspirin for pain.

Increase in gravity

1971: Sometimes I feel very heavy from at least my knees down, as though the lower half of my body had turned to lead. Sometimes it feels as though the pull of gravity had become much greater suddenly. I finally kept track of when this happens—usually shopping when I am on my feet for a while after having been seated in the car. It must have something to do with circulation.

Bones and Muscles

1971: My bones feel as though they were made of rubber sometimes. My muscles feel "sweet," the feeling of when a broken bone is beginning to mend or when a sprain is getting well or when I am stiff from using unaccustomed muscles and someone rubs them. Then it feels almost too good—"sweet." I can duplicate this feeling if I sit on my foot, and my leg "goes to sleep," and I don't stamp on it or rub it or wait until the feeling goes away, but rather walk on it as soon as it stops being completely numb. First it prickles each time it touches the floor, then just before it starts feeling like the other leg it feels "sweet."

Is it all a matter of circulation, then? What about my bones? There are blood vessels and nerves in the Haversian canals; is there feeling there?

1973: I still ache when I get tired, many people do a little, I think. I have not had any of the other sensations since I started treatment. The bones, muscles, and gravity feelings are also those which go with "flu," and I felt as though I had the flu or something most of the eight years I was sick. Now I get a little panicky when I do get some flu-like virus, but it has just run its course each time for a year now. My broken toe did not give me any further clues, but this wasn't like having a broken bone immobile.

Spiders in my Blood

1971: I have spiders in my blood. If I concentrate, I know that they are little tiny red spiders. Perhaps my red corpuscles have grown legs and are wiggling. It is everywhere, never local, but everywhere under the skin. I have actually had black ants crawling up my legs or arms when I was weeding in the garden without being able to tell the difference or know they were there until one bit.

This is not the feeling of "electricity" but a feeling of motion, a bit like "crawling" skin, only inside, and it seems to be in my blood vessels. "Bad blood" went out with the Victorian novel, but it is certainly more descriptive than "tension" or "stress." Is this circulation, too? What would give that sensation?

1973: My mental image was that the niacin melted the legs off of the spiders, or melted them, since I know that niacin breaks up lipids in the blood, and my lipid count was extremely high. Niacin also expands the blood vessels (just the capillaries?). Could some of the blood vessels be small enough and some of the molecules large enough that one could actually feel them going through—sort of an inner micro-traffic jam?

Someone is Sticking Pins in Me

1971: Really no one is sticking pins in me; they are sticking pins in a little wax doll that represents me. Voodoo: Since there are no witch doctors in my subculture I'll have to try another approach. It does feel like pins, sharp but not pressed hard, just a little prick here and there, perhaps 20 distinct pricks on each of my legs, each of my arms, my trunk. They aren't in unison: here and there, off and on, like lights on a sign that sparkle singly. Whoever is using that voodoo doll would have to be an expert at pin sticking to do so many so fast. Each one is distinct, and it doesn't seem to be in the same place twice. I can't quite tell about that. It's a little like prickling skin when I am very hot and itchy, but the sensations are too far apart. Pins it must be. It lasts up to half an hour, usually when I am lying down.

Circulation again or somehow connected with circulation? I suppose it is nerve endings I feel, but what makes them react? Nerves don't just spontaneously go off (do they?) or we would still be talking about "nervous breakdowns." It happened again last night, and this time I tried to be on the alert. Just after my legs warmed up, the pricking started. It wasn't severe and didn't last long.

1973: All of the problems I had identified as having to do with circulatory problems cleared up immediately upon taking niacin. It took six weeks for my body to get used to the niacin. First there was the burning, then burning accompanied by inner chills, then just the chills, so I was not thinking about such things as pin pricks and spiders in my blood. None of them have come back, ever.

I wonder, in connection with things that I had decided were circulatory, not only about circulation itself which has obviously improved (my feet and hands don't get so cold or my toes or fingers turn blue for no reason any more), but also about the feeling of "electricity" and the pin pricks. Is there an increased permeability of the walls of the blood vessels, either from the expansion itself or from the sloughing-off of accumulated fats by the action of nicotinic acid? And what effect would this have on the stimulation of nerves? From a purely mechanical point of view, when blood vessels are contracted or the walls coated, could only some chemicals get through which stimulate nerve endings while others do not get through, giving an uneven effect?

The main feeling everywhere, including emotions, was of an "evening-out" of sensation with treatment. A lot of schizophrenics have a great deal of copper. I did not, in my blood, but was dumping thousands of units on a scale where a little over 100 was normal. Does copper act as a good conductor of electricity in the body as well as out? I know very little about neurotransmission. My reading so far (Hawkins and Pauling, Hoffer and Osmond, Pfeiffer et al.) does not deal with the interaction of the endocrine system with the nervous system as such. I do take Zn for copper displacement and Mn, Mg, and Ca, and K in addition to B3 and C (three grams a day), and other B vitamins and E in lesser amounts. I felt well before adding the mineral supplements six months after starting treatment when I visited Pfeiffer's clinic, but I did feel better after taking the supplements he recommended.

The Hot Poker

1971: Pins are unpleasant. A red hot poker thrust into my heart just as I drop off to sleep is terrifying. It happens so often that I am almost afraid to relax, to drift off. I can't wake clear up to make note of just what happens as I go to sleep since, if I do, whatever bodily processes are involved at that time are interrupted. I have asked doctors about this a number of times although I have never gone to a doctor just for this one symptom. I have been told that it is just nerves. One doctor even told me what nerve it is. But again, why? What sets the nerve off? They have all said not to worry about it. O.K., so I don't worry. It still hurts. It still makes me anxious about going to sleep. Usually it happens just once, but sometimes I have tried to go to sleep two or three times to be awakened with a jerk and racing heart each time. First there is the pain, then I jerk, then my heart pounds, and I breathe heavily—from the pain or fear? Or does my heart stop for a second, then pound, then the pain and jerk? Sometimes I feel a little pain during the day and a shooting pain down my arms, and the three last fingers of each hand tingle, especially the left hand.

I am observing more carefully now. I have found that the real pain and the pounding heart occur only when I am lying on my left side, so I can avoid most of the unpleasantness. Is it a hot poker or an electric poker? A feeling of an electrical jolt awakens me just as I am passing the sleep threshold. It spreads from a painful dot underneath my left breast to a radius about the size of a dinner plate, then becomes more diffuse. This is followed a second later by an "answering" electrical feeling in my feet going up to my knees. From being cold, they become immediately warm. Sometimes the muscles and glands in the back of my throat feel strange at the same time that my legs tingle, then my mouth suddenly fills with saliva. This last does not happen every time.

1973: It took my doctor and a heart specialist plus the laboratory tests to figure most of this one out. Lab. tests reported hyperlipoproteinemia, phenotype II, which can lead to accelerated atherosclerosis and heart attacks. My heart itself is in fine shape. I have a stomach hernia which swells. This bumped against my heart which in turn bumped against rib arthritis which I did not know I had. It is just on two spots on two ribs under my left breast where I would not ordinarily be aware of it. I still get a feeling of a little capsule of ammonia or something aromatic being burst on my left side on occasion.

Hyperventilation

1971: This is something known and therefore not mysterious. It is very frightening when it happens for the first time, and you can't get your breath, and your heart pounds, and you pass out for the first time in your life listening to a pretty ringing in your ears and seeing purple ringed with gold. This happened for about three months in about 1968. Since it happened only when I first awoke, the psychiatrist I was seeing at the time suggested that I get a complete physical examination since it did not appear to be the usual "anxiety attack," although that is what she continued to call it. I learned to control it, usually, by holding my breath.

Hallucinations and "Split Personality"?

197.1: I think I have hallucinated twice in my life, once visual, once auditory. The visual hallucination was when I was four years old and had had pneumonia and a high fever for almost a week. One night I awoke lying on my back with a big gray kangaroo with flat heavy feet on my chest. My mother told me it was just a "nightmare." I remember being incensed; I knew the difference between a kangaroo and a horse. The other time I was not sick. I was living away from home but in the next town and thought I heard my mother call from another room just as I went to sleep. Since she was somewhat intrigued with the idea of ESP, I knew she would not be bothered if I telephoned her. I did and woke her up. She was pleased that I cared, and I was somewhat embarrassed.

I feel a little deprived. I've been officially "schizophrenic" now for at least seven years and don't know any more about hallucinations or "split personality" than I did before. I suppose one can say there is a "split" when a person has all of her roles but not a "me," but that is more of an observer's impression than mine. There has been a distinct feeling of unreality, of living on another plane, but no other world, no other me.

Emotions as Sensations

1971: By taking physical symptoms first rather than starting with thought or overwhelming emotion, I have just about come to the conclusion that schizophrenia is, in itself, sensation, or that it includes sensations which cannot be controlled and which are then translated by the mind into either physical or emotional pain or (sometimes) pleasure along with the appropriate logic for either the physical or emotional: "I feel thus and so, therefore. . ." Another possibility is that a particular chemical condition stimulates both a felt emotion and a painful memory at the same time. Certainly it is not the one-way "psychosomatic" mind over matter thing we have been force-fed for so long in our culture.

I have tried to separate the emotions from the sensations and find the pleasure-pain aspect of a single quality of sensation. The only two that I feel absolutely as different aspects of the same physical sensation are anxiety and euphoria. It is as though, with a flick of a switch, some minute change turns one into the other.

Tentative Pleasure-Pain Principles of Feeling

Main Location	Quality	Pain	Pleasure
High,floods upwards to head.	"Charged" (electric)	anxiety	euphoria
		hate	"in love"
		anger	determination
Chest, *shoulders.*	"Flooding" (flowing)	resentment	enthusiasm
Body cavity.	"Dull" vs. "Lull"	betrayal	loved (security)
	"Empty" vs. "Fulfilled"	loneliness	love *(together-"we")*
	?	guilt	love(giving)

All of these can be felt in waves or are "whole body," but I have listed what seem to be the main locations of sensation. I can't describe the quality of sensation that I had hoped I could. I suppose that somewhere there are textbooks with all sorts of chemical components of emotion, where they originate, what acts upon what. This certainly isn't "in" at the moment.

"It" can feel like any strong emotion, I think, or the numb feeling of too much emotion finally blocked. It can't feel like deep and lasting contentment. I can't feel the gentle emotions, like the feeling of tender mother love while looking at a sleeping baby. When my daughter first brought her little boy here as a baby, I was determined to recapture the feeling of love I had felt so easily in the past and knew was there. There was actual physical pain involved, one sensation combatting others. I felt it mostly in my stomach and chest, a real pushing or pulling, one feeling working against another. If I had not already gone through the exercise of taking apart emotions and sensations, I would probably have given up. The feeling of this kind of love finally won through, but never quite replaced the other sensations.

It is a little like loving through pain of any kind, a headache, a toothache, flu. You know you do, but it's hard to feel it.Why, I have asked, am I denied the luxury of temporary feelings of anger, resentment, hate, fear, which are normal human as well as animal reactions? I don't dare even start to feel them now, just as I can't drink even one cup of real coffee because the feeling stays, takes days to wear off even though I have no mental feeling of the emotion. Emotions have me, I don't have them. Why can't I feel contentment? Having experienced life both ways, I choose to love, I choose contentment.

1973: I suppose this is another way of considering "split personality," thought and emotion not going in the same direction. I didn't feel "split" any more than I feel "split" if I have a known disease that I don't want to have. Again, the disease has me, not I the disease, when we are talking about germs, at least.

"Passions," emotions too strong to handle, are no longer a problem. It begins to seem redundant and very obvious to say that the warm loving emotions and contentment are mostly in the "vital organ" region and really can't be felt very well if there are all sorts of discomforts going on around them, if, indeed, they can be felt at all. I think the deep sense of loneliness experienced by many schizophrenics may be an absence of sensation there. I did have a deep sense of compassion at times, almost the feeling of loneliness spreading to include others. I still feel compassion toward the people who are ill and resentment at the way they are studied, like monkeys in a zoo, or perfectly healthy individuals acting strangely for dark and mysterious motives. We've come a long way since the Middle Ages!

Accepted Sensations

1971: Some sensations are accepted as American categories of illness. These are the ones I asked doctors about, preferably in connection with a strep throat, something that showed and with which I ran a fever. Mostly I felt as though I had the flu, and I did have pneumonia once for a week before going to a doctor, not because I did not feel sick enough but because I did not feel any difference at all until one day I could not stand up. I felt as though I were running a fever most of the time. My temperature was usually subnormal, which I was told was normal for me although it had never been before. My blood pressure was always very low (and always had been), and I was told that that was good by doctors. I felt fatigued most of the time, the feeling of already having climbed a mountain before I had even begun. I often climbed the stairs at home on my hands and knees when no one else was there, just because it was so much easier. I broke into cold sweats when I vacuumed for more than five minutes or worked at any physical project. It did not help to know that these are the "vague psychosomatic aches and pains of the bored-neurotic-American-housewife." The main feeling was that of "shock." I have never been in surgical shock or shock after an accident, but the feeling is what I have read of shock (including culture shock), and the feeling that I have had after being startled—sort of a numbness, a turning off, accompanied by a "feeling" of "humming" inside.

1973: This may have been just about what it was in my case. For that reason, I like the Spanish term "susto" when translated as "shock" or even "fright." Now both temperature and blood pressure are normal. I still do not have a great deal of energy, but I never have. Certainly there is no feeling of extreme fatigue, and I have no problem with ordinary chores.

Studying and pounding a typewriter used to be just about all I was capable of doing, now I have just spent about three weeks lobbying through three Congressional Office Buildings against FDA regulations limiting vitamins. (This regulation may have created enough controversy that MD's may learn what they are again.)

MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

1971: "I think, therefore I am." If there is little or no somatic sense of identity, if all the senses with which we perceive the world are not functioning properly, even if the dysperception is minimal but cumulative, how are we to make sense of the world we live in? "I think, therefore I am" is about all that some of us have left. Some alternative subjective reactions to the schizophrenic experience could be taking what we experience literally and trying to rationalize it: zeroing in on our emotions and saying, "seeing is believing, feeling is knowing"; trying to find out what the difference is between this state and the previous state accepted as normal; listening to the experts. I have done all of these. Comparing and categorizing appears to be the most profitable, although I don't know where to go from here since I can't get a doctor to listen to me and can't order tests for myself. I don’t think a person could compare as I have just done if he were much sicker than I was or if it were a slow progression so that he might just look back on childhood as a better time. And I wonder about children who are born to live in what has to be a somewhat alien world.

Conclusions 1971: My most startling conclusions are that all of the senses are affected and that a somatic sense of identity is basic to.normality. There are a number of sensations which are clearly connected with circulation, perhaps sense perceptions are as well, including the somatic sense of identity. There appears to be a blocking of some sensations and an intensification of others. When I study them sensation by sensation I can usually find something that occurs off and on in normal living to compare it to. It may be just a matter of duration and intensity.

Most of the feelings are normal and proper responses for one situation or another. They just don't usually last long enough for concern or investigation. The reactions may all be useful or needed in the business of living, but just don't turn off and on as they should. No wonder there is such a vague dividing line between normal and abnormal and that people see themselves so easily in abnormal psychology books; it isn't just behavior or what we commonly think of as personality traits, but feelings. 1973: Shortly after my period of self-observation and categorizing, I learned of the work done by Hoffer and Osmond and others who consider sensory dysperception characteristic of schizophrenia. I then found a doctor through the American Schizophrenia Association who has joined the small group of "Orthomolecular psychiatrists" after years of independent research along the same lines. I was finally asked the questions I thought I should have been asked and more besides. I have taken the Hoffer-Osmond Diagnostic Test (HOD) in retrospect (without scoring) and I think it would have quickly shown the sense dysperceptions and their severity.

Diagnosis based upon numerous laboratory tests was:

Malabsorption: "flat" glucose-tolerance curve followed by a normal curve for an intravenous test. Hyperlipoproteinemia, phenotype II: based upon several tests, including lipid fractionation.

Chronic pancreatitis: high lipids, other blood tests. Several B vitamin deficiencies: shown by blood tests which also showed high vitamin A. High urine copper: blood copper normal. Borderline low thyroid: shown by scan followed by radioactive uptake test. Borderline normal kryptopyrrole: Mauve test taken several months into treatment.

The type of hyperlipoproteinemia that was shown is a fairly frequent familial disease which leads to atherosclerosis and heart attacks although not necessarily schizophrenia symptoms ("no one ever dies of schizophrenia"). My father has had several heart attacks, my mother's mother died of a heart attack, and my younger sister has had one. She is on megavitamin therapy under a heart specialist after trying it on her own when she learned about it through AA. Two of my children have been tested and show similar signs, and one of her children has been tested for this. Others had had other tests earlier. When there is not malabsorption, there is hypoglycemia and preclinical diabetes; there appears to be a pancreas problem throughout the family. There is also some brain dysrythmia in one of my sister's children and two of mine.

When my sister and I compared physical* symptoms, rather than personality traits, we found that ours were similar, that our children's were similar, and that our mother had shared most of them. At least five of us have seen psychiatrists from a period of a few weeks to 20 years. I suspect that my mother's mother also shared in the symptoms since she spent about a year in a "rest home" after the death of an infant daughter. My mother had said that she had never stopped grieving for this baby. My sister became ill when she was 11 and was thought at that time to have leukemia (characterized by high blood copper as in schizophrenia, arsenic poisoning, and other things.)

Here is a family with the vague "inherited predisposition to schizophrenia" made just about as explicit as it can presently be made for four generations with tests for two. Everyone on therapy is well now.

After working as a secretary for my own doctor for several months, I now well realize that "schizophrenia" is not one disease, so of course megavitamin therapy is not the latest magic cure for everyone, although most of this doctor's patients are helped by it. My doctor works with a whole range of medications, including antibiotics and tranquilizing drugs when necessary. Drugs are kept to a minimum whenever possible. "Orthomolecular therapy" appears to me to be the kind of medical care I received as a child, updated by later findings in medical science, biochemistry, and nutrition. It is the kind of treatment I took for granted still existed widely until I tried to find it.

Remarks on making the study

When I first reached the conclusion that all of the senses were affected, were changed somehow, I felt that I had made a "scientific" discovery and that everyone would be interested in it. Laymen were very interested; professionals, especially physicians, psychiatrists, and a minister discounted it although the psychiatrist I was seeing at the moment was fairly interested. When I learned of Hoffer, Osmond, and other biochemically oriented scientists and psychiatrists through my sister a month or so after reaching my conclusions, I learned that I had "reinvented the wheel." However, my independent participant-observation in schizophrenia confirms to me the validity of using altered sense perceptions as a primary diagnostic tool, and the fact that at least one sufferer was able to select these as primary symptoms substantiates this method of initial diagnosis. (I have not read of the inclusion of a "somatic sense of identity," however.)

My initial reaction at the start of the study was a sort of fear and hesitancy. I was not afraid of what I would find. I had certainly been aware of these and other symptoms as they occurred over the years, although I had not interpreted them. I had already accepted the diagnosis of "schizophrenia" on the basis of research for a term paper in physical anthropology on the genetic and biochemical basis of schizophrenia earlier in the year. This research covered the field broadly, but did not lead to the writings of "Orthomolecular psychiatrists" or the theory of sensory dysperceptions. I had been in a real panic when I started the class paper, fearing the "gas-lighting" effect. Actually, when I did find myself scattered here and there in my research, whether for physical symptoms, personality traits, or social pressures, it was supportive, only what I had been trying to tell doctors and psychiatrists right along.

While I had accepted the diagnosis of "schizophrenia" and was determined to find out what it was for me, I was not ready to accept the term "neurotic" since I had always considered myself a very sensible person even when I was sick. Self-examination for physical symptoms is considered "neurotic," "sick-sick-sick," a sign of hypochondria, of morbid self-centeredness in our society. This is the sort of internalized norm by which people are kept from questioning the wisdom of experts in any society.

Once I plunged in "in the interest of science" to justify doing it at all, I felt the thrill of discovery, especially as a significant pattern emerged.

The "wheel" had already been invented. Had my "ego" or "identity" depended upon scientific discovery, I would have been crushed. Understanding was far more important. While understanding was important and took away the darkest mystery and eased anxiety, my real aim was to recover my health. I had no way of even getting inside a laboratory door by myself, or of knowing just what tests to ask for had I been able to accomplish that.

The wheel was invented at least 20 years ago and has been improved upon since, yet many of America's institutions, it appears, are still not quite ready for the wheel.

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