

Without apology...

I make no apology for writing yet again to draw attention to the book that I have written and published on the Internet. Consider this – I am almost seventy-nine, and statistics tell me that I have a finite amount of time within which I can create publicity. Why should I bother? Surprisingly, because I have yet to find published a book similar to mine that draws on twenty-five actual and continuous years of hearing voice. But more than that – of continuously experiencing all of the many symptoms that are classed as ‘first rank’, when trying to arrive at a diagnosis of ‘schizophrenia’. And yet, of being able to say “I have never been ill from this cause.”

Without much trouble, I could provide you with a list, probably hundreds of items long, of books and academic publications *about* schizophrenia. Indeed, so many that one could well believe in the existence of a ‘schizophrenia industry’. Within that whole list, I would defy you to find a single publication produced by someone who, themselves, had actually experienced the conditions about which they are writing. I do not wish in any way to detract from the zeal and dedication with which researchers pursue their goal of trying to find a cause and cure of schizophrenia. Some with the selfless dedication of the true researcher: others with the active support and motivation of some of the major pharmaceutical companies, whose only belief seems to be that there will be a successful and marketable drug that will deal with this condition. All that I can say is that they are chasing theory and speculation: I am producing first-hand experience, and telling them ‘search no more’!

‘First Rank Symptoms’ – just to remind you they are:

- 1 Voices speak one’s thoughts aloud.
- 2 Two or more voices (in the mind) discuss one in the third person.
- 3 Voices describe one’s actions as they happen.
- 4 Bodily sensations are imposed by an external force.
- 5 Thoughts stop, and one feels that they are extracted by an external force.
- 6 Thoughts, not “really” one’s own, are inserted among one’s own thoughts.
- 7 Thoughts are broadcast onto the outside world and heard by all.
- 8 Alien feelings are imposed by an external force.
- 9 Alien impulses are imposed by an external force.
- 10 “Volitional” actions are imposed by an external force.
- 11 Perceptions are “delusional” and un-understandable.

Throughout all of the time of which I write, I have kept notes, and an analysis of these shows that I had written about and described the *actuality* of these symptoms, albeit in my own words, long before I was even aware that there was such a list.

If you are at all interested in learning of the tangible effect of these intrusions – for that is what they are – the consequences of *spiritual intrusion* into the mind, body and senses of an individual - then I urge you, nay, *beg you*, to read my book.

Even though it is available as a free download, many have told me that they would rather have a book in hand, than, what amounts to, taking the trouble to download. For these – some of whom are good friends – help is at hand, for if all goes well, I shall be published in print early in 2005, and will announce the publication here.

Normally one quotes from its introduction to give a foretaste of a book: just to be perverse, I am quoting from the closing pages: -

Satellite television has brought to me a fascinating window on a wider world and the opportunities to observe and try to understand, people from a vast range of cultures - people whom one saw previously, if one saw them at all, as ‘performers’ in documentaries or devised programmes, and subject to the presentation and interpretation of the programmes’ compilers. Now I can watch them completely untainted by the intervening ‘editor interpreter’. I watch them in their own dramas, chat shows, news bulletins and a variety of presentations and versions of ‘Who Wants to be a Millionaire?’ I look at faces and expressions, moods and reactions, but ‘look’ and ‘watch’ are the two operative words, for apart from sensing the general mood of the piece I have not the slightest idea of what is being said. When I watch Chinese television there are subtitles – but they also are in Chinese. I would dearly like to know what Dunia and the people whom she interviews on Abu Dhabi television are discussing, because it appears to be serious and intelligent, but apart from words that sound vaguely like ‘Iraq’ and ‘Arabia’, there is nothing to guide me. Worse still is a news bulletin when the person being interviewed is speaking English, but is then being talked over and the screen has rolling subtitles all in Arabic.

The world and outlook of those who are locked into their inner voices is something like this. They have their own transmission received inside their head that no one else can hear or comprehend, while, viewed on the screen of life that is going on outside them, they see people, faces expressions, actions, moods and reactions, and try to interpret something that is far off. Something that is almost unreachable from within a mind and body that are often numbed by the drugs that are meant to make life more bearable (but which often are there solely to ‘contain’ them). A world with which they find it increasingly difficult to communicate, to such an extent that attempts to do so may be abandoned altogether, especially when the inner world can appear warm and friendly.

Is it easiest simply to abandon them to their inner world and the companions that frequent it? An inner world that can be welcoming, friendly, comforting – an inner world that suddenly can spawn terror and threat; create immeasurable anxiety; propose devilish and obscene compacts – compacts that if accepted can bring down an even heavier rain of threat and castigation from the unseen tormentors. One can go on and on in seemingly endless speculation, and offer insights and advice that may or may not have relevance to an individual – if indeed one knew that the torment was actually there behind the closed door that a life and the face fronting it have become.

It would be difficult to forget the time when my stable was being re-roofed. Right to the fore of the action were the two Geordies – Big Derek and Brian. They came and worked - and worked hard - for ‘readies’, and stayed until about one o’clock when they went off to the King’s Head for a liquid lunch, and then possibly an afternoon fishing off the beach. One morning they came and they were immensely subdued, in fact, for such a big man, it was odd that Derek seemed close to tears.

“Clarry’s topped his self,” said Brian eventually. Work was pointless, and they went off to the King’s Head for more appropriate solace. Clarry – or Clarence to give him his Sunday name – had farmed with brother Ronnie, until they had given up the farm. But farmers never retire, and one met them here and there as they helped out on other farms - hedging, dykeing, walling, hay-timing - or working in people’s gardens.

Clarry had retired to a cottage beside the main road and I saw him frequently as he worked around a friend’s premises. This particular morning his daughter had come downstairs, to a fire newly laid in the grate, a cup of tea part drunk and still warm, a sandwich half eaten, and, puzzled, had gone outside to find Clarry hanging. And no one knew why! It was over ten years ago, and I don’t think anyone knows to this day. There in his inner world something had thrown a switch – but he had not been ill that anyone knew about – certainly not mentally. What was it that Clarry couldn’t talk to anyone about – confide - consult?

I thought of him in happier times, as for instance when the local Shepherds’ Meet and a meet of the beagles had coincided, and the Brown Cow had been open all day – and Clarry hadn’t wasted a minute. There he was, well into the evening, a huge turkey drumstick in his hand, beating time to the choruses of the hunting songs, and swaying perilously to and fro, and the picture of him swaying gently at the end of a rope is one that even now I find unbearable.

I have difficulty revisiting the time when I desperately wanted to die and escape from all that plagued my mind and the situation that I couldn’t understand but from which I frantically wanted to flee. I wasn’t then hearing voices, but had seemingly insurmountable problems. Why didn’t I just do it? As I wrote earlier, it had to appear to be an accident, and I couldn’t devise one that I thought would be convincing. Relevant to my thoughts about Clarry – I couldn’t talk to anyone, because I couldn’t put my inner agony into words. I vaguely remember once saying to the Consultant as I attempted to broach the subject, something such as “I wish I had a terminal illness” – thinking that that would be a way out that would not create problems for anyone. “I suppose you want cancer” he said – and said it with a sneer; nothing else will describe his tone. I never tried to speak to anyone about it ever again, and I have only recalled the painful times for the purpose of writing to you to help you to understand the torment in the unseen world behind the facade of a face, and a life that is seemingly being ‘lived’ successfully.

‘Writing to you’ – I began to write more than five years ago. Some has come easy; some with the pain of unhappiness and disaster revisited. I hope that it has been worthwhile in that it may help someone. I began with the words of the diminutive Brazilian bishop, Dom Helder Camera, from which I get the title of my book, and cannot think of any that are more appropriate with which to end.

Don’t get annoyed
If the people coming to see you,
If the people wanting to talk to you
Can’t manage to express
The uproar raging inside them.

Much more important
Than listening to the words

Is imagining the agonies,
Fathoming the mystery,
Listening to the silences.