The paranoid has to be a fascinating topic to anyone invested in the code of rationality adhered to in modern industrialized societies. Since the Renaissance, the value of reason has been a constant and valued cultural theme. The products of rationality such as technology and government planning have been viewed as successful endeavors and, as such, have tended to confirm the vision of the rational ideal. Thus, to see the intellect consuming the self instead of consensually validating the truth of the time is a phenomenon that could symbolically represent the society gone awry. Such a picture could elicit a puzzlement, if not about societal institutions, about the way we wish to think.

Possibly such concerns are more the interests of philosophers and novelists, but the use of the term, paranoid, is common in society. The case of Jim Jones is extreme, but the understanding of the situation stated in terms of a paranoid psychosis spread rapidly to the lips of even the simplest TV commentator. Mark Siegal, in an analysis of *Gravity's Rainbow* by Thomas Pynchon, subtitled the work “Creative Paranoia” and considered the main characters to be moving toward the illumination that could occur in a state of anti-paranoia, a condition where reality is not connected. However, it is not only literary work that has used the paranoid to play the fool who eventually is proven to be wise; there also have been chronicles of societal movements that upon reflection have seemed, at least, to be delusional. “Popular delusions began so early, spread so widely, and have lasted so long that instead of two or three volumes, fifty would scarcely suffice to detail their history” (Charles Mackey, *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions*, Richard Bentley Publisher, London, 1841. Reissued by L.C. Page and Capy, 1932). In short, the world of paranoia is everywhere if one is not too discriminating about the major attributes of the condition. The study of the paranoid and his behavior in society has reached beyond the domain of psychopathology. In fact, possibly of most interest—certainly in terms of theoretical developments—is the question of the paranoid personality and his place in society. Could the paranoid be considered as a common or at least not unusual element in society?

Saying that the paranoid is schizophrenic does not solve the puzzle. The sharing of symptoms does not prove an identity. Many other disorders share like symptoms, but they are of a different nature. So with the paranoid, he may share symptoms with the schizophrenic, but this may not mean he is of the same nature. In fact, I believe we will find him to have an opposing nature. It has to be shown that the paranoid as a process is not the same as the schizophrenic. I believe this issue of *Schizophrenia Bulletin* will attest to that fact. It also seems clear that the hallmark of the paranoid, the delusion, is not owned exclusively by the paranoid, but is shared by other disorders as well as other seemingly normal individuals who
are undergoing extreme stress. Interesting questions then are: What is the paranoid process, especially as distinct from its intertwined diagnostic twin, the schizophrenic? How can we separate the two diagnostically, or should they be so separated? Are there family or genetic patterns that become observable when the two groups are separated? Are there biochemical and/or psychophysiological processes that are unique to each? Are there distinct psychological processes? Should they be treated differently? . . . and so on. The authors included in this issue attempt to provide some answers to these basic questions.

In effect, the present issue attempts the presentation of the nature of paranoia as it exists in all its parts. To perform such an operation, authors must draw a distinction between the physiological or psychological structure of a pathological group such as the paranoid or the schizophrenic and his level or type of disorganization at a particular moment in time. All of us, in effect, will touch the elephant and report back in order to construct the nature of the beast.

This issue demonstrates that a great deal of research is available on the subject of the paranoid disorder and the paranoid schizophrenic. Enough data are present, in fact, to suggest some interesting hypotheses about the process active in the paranoid as compared to the schizophrenic, especially in terms of genetic relationships. There is certainly more information available than is presented here. Only 20 years ago, few were asking questions about the paranoid schizophrenic as distinct from the nonparanoid schizophrenic. Now, in some journals, research is not seen as adequate unless paranoid and nonparanoid schizophrenics are separated. The evidence producing such concerns is widely available but has not been systematically organized. A major purpose of the present issue is to organize the available data on the paranoid to demonstrate the holes in our knowledge base. Once such information is organized, we may discover an original personality with a predisposition to a particular type of behavior or symptomatology. On the other hand, we may end up like the originators of the diagnostic system and consider a subset of the paranoid as a variant of schizophrenia and another subset as a separate disorder. In either case, we should be closer to explaining a pathological condition in terms of clear psychological and physical dimensions. As the reader joins us and progresses through the issue, the relevant questions may become obvious, and the directions in which to proceed clinically may be suggested. Possibly from the answers suggested the direction of the clinical treatment of the paranoid will undergo an obversion.

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