

PSI AND CLINICAL PRACTICE

PROCEEDINGS OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

HELD IN LONDON, ENGLAND

OCTOBER 28-29, 1989

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Edited By

Lisette Coly and Joanne D. S. McMahon

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INTRODUCTION

LISETTE COLY: My name is Lissette Coly and as Vice President of the Foundation and on behalf of the Board of Trustees I welcome you to this, the Parapsychology Foundation's 38th Annual International Conference.

Our theme this year is *Psi and Clinical Practice*. The observations of psi processes in clinical experiences and related research by our esteemed panelists and observers are sure to provoke lively discussions coupled with meaningful insights of our topic.

Our founder, Eileen J. Garrett, as most of you are aware, started her formal education in psychical research in London in the 1920s. A well-known psychic, as well as writer, publisher, researcher, and foundation executive, Eileen Garrett was and still continues to be a fascinating and rich subject for clinical study as she offered herself and her alleged psychic gifts for research in an effort to find the answers to the many questions raised by the purported paranormal phenomena she encountered. It is, indeed, unfortunate that she is not with us today as both subject and researcher.

The late Jan Ehrenwald, eminent psychiatrist, described by his colleague, Montague Ullman as perhaps the first of the modern era to undertake a serious assessment of the significance of the telepathy hypothesis for an understanding of paranoia and schizophrenic psychoses, conducted several studies with Garrett. Ehrenwald's comments, taken from his book, *Anatomy of Genius* (1984), are of value not only in describing her, but perhaps other persons observed in clinical practice displaying similar psychic manifestations:

What then, are the conclusions from our re-examination of Mrs. Garrett as a "psychic," "trance medium," or just subject of psychiatric case history? Evidently, the standard clinical approach scratches the surface only. It is true that her mental dissociation, her "spirit controls"—and their underlying psychodynamics—would suggest the presence of a conversion hysteria. Her colorful reports of hallucinations, interspersed with delusional material, may have brought her to the verge of a psychotic break. But invariably, she bounced back from such episodes, with the core of her personality unimpaired. Similarly, she attained a remarkable control over her trance states

and would snap back into her “ordinary” identity at the drop of the conjurer’s hat, as it were. Her apparent split into dual or multiple personalities would again be replaced by a seamless whole. If a clinical label was needed, she could be described as a *holophrenic* like Joan of Arc, Saint Teresa of Avila, or C. G. Jung; the only aberration left would be her striking capacity for existential shifts along these lines.

In one of our last conversations she turned to me and remarked half in jest, half in earnest “I know, Jan, you think I’m crazy, but I love you anyway.” Eileen was wrong about the first part of her remark. But I am sure she sensed my boundless admiration for what she stood for. She was an explorer of uncharted territories, where others had merely studied the maps. She walked a tightrope between the extremes of madness and genius—and she did it with grace and an Irish smile. (pp. 172–173).

At this time I would like to introduce you to another of Eileen Garrett’s accomplishments and contributions to the field—her daughter, the Parapsychology Foundation’s most able second President, Mrs. Eileen Coly.

GREETINGS

EILEEN COLY: Well—I would say madness, genius, grace, and an Irish smile is a formidable act to follow, but varying shades of Eileen Garrett and her gifts I have had to deal with for many years!

Too much time has gone by since our last London conference in 1982, which was devoted to Parapsychology's Second Century. However, it is a pleasure to be here once again and to welcome all of you present today—so many old friends and many others we have been eager to meet in person.

Clinical practice and psi is a most valuable topic and definitely belongs in our ongoing conference series. We are very lucky to have been able to prevail upon today's participants to share with us their observations and work experiences in clinical practice as it pertains to psychic phenomena.

Eileen Garrett once wrote “. . . a great physician, whether of the body, the mind, or both, is no mere mechanic tinkering with a machine-like human body and personality. He is and must be a creative and sometimes daring scientist, who understands full well that in treating the bodies and personalities of human beings he is dealing with something in essence far from machine-like, even though man can build true machines by simulating the human physical or nervous system.”

It is now time for me to turn these proceedings over to the capable hands of our conference moderator, Dr. Robert L. Morris, who of course, is well known to all of you as holding the Koestler Chair of Parapsychology at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. We at the Foundation have followed his career for 20 years or more as a Foundation grantee, conference participant, educator, respected researcher as well as valued friend. Let us now proceed with the work of the conference.
