

CLOSING REMARKS

STANLEY KRIPPNER: I have been asked to give a few comments to wrap up the conference. I will simply tell you what for me were some of the salient points from this excellent series of papers and presentations and questions.

Our theme was "Parapsychology and Human Nature" and, as I mentioned before, the majority of our panelists are not members of the Parapsychological Association. However, they are interested and contributing people in their own professions who have something to offer to this field.

Those of us who have listened to these papers are more aware of the omissions in the way in which human nature is presented by orthodox science. For example, Dr. Wickram studied people with a high hypnotic propensity and, much to his surprise, he found that most of them reported certain subjective paranormal experiences. When he submitted this paper for publication in a leading scientific journal, the editor was enthusiastic about the material, but he advised Dr. Wickram to omit the parapsychological material. Dr. Wickram refused to do so and after some back-and-forth argumentation won his case. However, one can speculate as to how much similar information has been deleted from accounts in the past. We know there have been similar reports of people with high fantasy potential and high suggestibility where the parapsychological element is not mentioned; the one great exception is the work of T. X. Barber. He is a person of such stature—and also of such firm convictions—that one cannot imagine an editor telling him to omit data from his papers. Yet one wonders if this has been a pattern over the years and if there have been parapsychological-type phenomena observed which have been deleted from the published accounts.

As I conceptualize it, parapsychology is the scientific study of reports of anomalous behavior and experience. We can lay aside for a moment the question as to whether these reports are veridical, and/or whether these phenomena are not explainable in terms of modern science's conception of time, space and energy. Even so, do not anomalous reports deserve to be investigated and reported in terms of what they

can teach us about human nature? I think it is our consensus that they deserve that attention.

For me, four basic points emerged from this conference. First, I think that there is no justification for psychotherapists or personality theorists or physicians working with human patients and clients and students to automatically label parapsychological-type reports as pathological. We now have enough evidence that reports of anomalous experience and behavior can be elicited from large numbers of the population. Among people with certain personality traits and propensities, these experiences are frequently reported. There is a normality rather than a pathology in these reports. I think that it is time that this is conceded.

Secondly, the material that we heard this weekend has implications for science education. Where do we find medical schools giving students one lecture, much less one course on this particular issue? And where do we find accurate content in graduate psychology programs? Is it any wonder that psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, social workers and educators hear these reports and either tell the person not to discuss his experience with anyone, increase the patient's dosage of medicine or recommend that he undergo intensive psychotherapy? Very rarely do students learning scientific methodology receive factual, open-minded material regarding parapsychology. When the topic of parapsychological phenomena is raised, the typical response is one that discounts the field completely. Instead of claiming that the data are seriously flawed and not of any value, the instructor could turn the question around stating that there are provocative data that have been collected by parapsychologists. Laying aside the issue of whether or not the data reflect "paranormal" processes, the instructor could ask how the student would investigate this topic. I think this approach would tend to open the minds of some of the people who later may be in a position to evaluate and judge grants and publications.

Third, I am pleased that these papers suggest that parapsychological gifts have some additional clues for identification of promising experimental subjects. There is another clue that psi, whatever it is, is embedded in a larger psychological context. How can we use that context in terms of selecting subjects? One direction is to identify people with high hypnotic propensity. The people who report fragrant smell experiences are another possibility. People who exhibit certain types of neurological irregularities might be another possibility. People who answer questionnaires in specific ways might be another possibility. People in emotionally intensive phases of psychotherapy present another possibility. Examining unusual states of consciousness is another

possibility. I think we have had some fine leads as to subject selection in our discussion this weekend.

Fourth, what can be said about the pre-paradigmatic nature of parapsychology? We have heard speakers refer to the prevailing Rhinean paradigm. In many ways the Rhinean paradigm is a behavioristic paradigm and focuses on stimulus and response. This was a politically astute decision in its day to obtain some semblance of respectability for the field. But in addition we have discussed a Jungian paradigm that sees synchronicity, acausality and quantum mechanics as possible connections. We also have the paradigms that are well established by cognitive psychologists to investigate psi from that point of view. Historical research is a legitimate tool for parapsychologists to use. Directly detectable psychokinetic phenomena have been presented as another approach to identifying and understanding psi. At Saybrook Institute we view science as disciplined inquiry. There are a number of approaches to disciplined inquiry and many of them might be quite suitable for parapsychologists to follow.

In conclusion, we would like to thank our eight panelists, each of whom gave a scholarly and provocative presentation. We have been pleased with the questions and comments from the members of the audience. We are pleased that they worked with us during the course of the weekend, informally and formally.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Parapsychology Foundation. Its annual conferences have met a high standard for meetings in which the problems posed by psi phenomena can be stated, explored, debated and, perhaps, someday answered.

LISETTE COLY: On behalf of the Parapsychology Foundation I would like to thank you all for your participation in this conference marking our 35th Anniversary year.

We are grateful to the members of the panel for their most thought-provoking papers and lively discussions. The papers and discussions will be published and the volume of the proceedings we feel sure will be an outstanding addition to our conference series.

Before we close these meetings a very special and large "thank you" must go to our conference moderator, Dr. Stanley Krippner, for his invaluable contributions to this conference. You ran the conference so smoothly, Stan, and seemingly so effortlessly, that we are very grateful.

Again thank you all—participants and observers—for your efforts to join us. We wish you a safe return home. Ladies and Gentlemen, the thirty-fifth Annual International Conference of the Parapsychology Foundation is adjourned.