

PSI, SCIENCE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

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Parapsychology derives its data from a variety of sources, supplied by investigators in various fields of research. Early workers collected authenticated, factual reports of phenomena. Today's laboratory workers devise methods of repeatable ESP or PK tests and their statistical evaluation. The psychiatrist focuses on spontaneous events in clinic or consulting room. Only the proper evaluation of data obtained by all these methods of approach can pave the way for parapsychology attaining the status of a truly scientific discipline in its own right.

Each method has its own criteria: the laboratory method its statistical significance, the early work its authentication of evidence. Psi occurrences in the psychoanalytic situation offer four criteria. First, the elements or motifs which we assume to be reproduced in a telepathic way must be identifiable as distinct elements within the context reviewed. Second, the element thus defined may be of such a unique kind that its simultaneous appearance in the two presumably corresponding sets of mental events cannot reasonably be ascribed to chance. Third, as in modern biochemical experiments certain molecules are tagged with a radio-active tracer element, the presence of specific distinctive features in an otherwise ambiguous telepathic incident may be described as the psychological *tracer effect*, and the data concerned as telepathic *tracer elements*. Fourth, there is the criterion of psychological significance. A patient may relate a dream whose manifest content contains one or two characteristics which by themselves are suggestive of telepathy between analyst and patient.

At the same time their closer psychodynamic evaluation may show that unless the telepathic interpretation of these elements is admitted, their deeper meaning remains obscure. It is only through realizing the telepathic nature of the elements concerned that we can close a gap in our understanding of such a dream.

On the basis of its psychological significance, the telepathic interpretation gives a reasonable account of an otherwise unintelligible element in the dream content and helps toward a better understanding of the patient's neurotic problem and his behavior in the transference relationship with his psychoanalyst.

Not every case can be expected to do justice to all these criteria. Each case must be judged on its own merits. As a general statement it may be said that the advantage of the statistical method lies in the fact that it tells us a little about a lot, while the psychodynamic approach is able to tell us a lot about a little.

All available evidence indicates that telepathic incidents are subject to much the same laws of psychodynamics as apply to the dream, to the neurotic symptom, to faulty actions, and the like. I may remind you of Freud's picture of the unconscious—a picture of complete intellectual anarchy. On the id level the laws of contradiction are no longer valid; a statement may be both true and false; love and hatred may stand for each other; black may be white; the sacred may be wicked; temporal order and sequence have lost their meaning; so have spatial relationships; the notions of past, present and future are hopelessly jumbled. Psi phenomena have much in common with these characteristics of the id level of functioning. They too seem to defy the laws of cause and effect as well as those of spatial and temporal order and sequence.

Psi phenomena, however, are at bottom of an ambiguous nature: While derived from a level of functioning devoid of spatio-temporal characteristics, their appearance on the conscious level is contingent on the capacity of the ego to invest them with all the trimmings, including temporal and local

"signs," which are characteristic of the ego level of functioning. One could say that psi phenomena have a Janus face: one oriented toward a world which can be expressed by reference to weighable and measurable data, and one toward a world of psychic reality which has so far defied any attempt at a quantifiable approach.

This is not the first time that the student of the human mind finds himself at the crossroads leading in the direction of two or more divergent systems of thought. I cite the controversy between the mechanistic approach toward a better understanding of human affairs (with its concept of a world devoid of purpose) and the teleological approach (with its concept of a coherent system of thought capable of explaining the universe and particularly human behavior in terms of purpose and meaning). Both approaches have contributed to the progress of science and the two are not mutually exclusive.

The seemingly paradoxical, extra-temporal and extra-spatial nature of psi phenomena calls for a third, if you like, *meta-logical* frame of reference. This third conceptual scheme conceives of world events in terms of a metalogical series, apparently independent of the familiar laws of cause and effect but compatible with a revised and expanded system of psychodynamics based on the evaluation of meaningful relationships. This does not mean that we should henceforth ignore the respective merits of either the mechanistic or the teleological approach to psi phenomena and to human affairs in general. Our suggested third, metalogical, frame of reference, simply tries to make allowance for the fact that the psi aspect of human experience cannot easily be reconciled and integrated with one or the other of the traditional systems of thought. It may admittedly be confined to the comparatively narrow segment of human experience in which *verifiable* psi phenomena come to our notice. But it is nevertheless just as indispensable for their proper understanding as is the mechanistic conceptual scheme for the understanding of a mechanistic series of events, or a teleological conceptual scheme for the understanding of a teleological series.