

PARAPSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH AT A PSYCHIATRIC CLINIC

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The number of psychiatrists who have examined the relationship between their field and parapsychology is surprisingly small. Yet such studies should be made, as "occult phenomena" are widespread and can just as well occur with the mentally ill. This situation resembles that of pre-Freudian psychology, at the turn of the century, relative to depth psychology and medical psychology. "Official" psychology ignored the subconscious for years, along with depth-psychological mechanisms in interpretation of psychosis and neurosis. When modern psychology entered these areas, results were interesting and fruitful. Now the study of parapsychology may have a similarly enlightening effect.

We have evidence that some facts in the psychopathology of brain diseases partially resemble parapsychological facts. In such cases, deficiency in sensory perceptions has been compensated by a talent in extrasensory perception. Also, in ESP card tests, changes in parapsychological faculties have become obvious after narco-analysis or electro-shock. Such similarities are not as yet fully understood and require further research.

The psi-factor may be of practical value to the physician when, without long interrogation of the patient, a telepath may be able to indicate the correct diagnosis and therapy. Here there is no question either of miracles or fraud, because we can deal with facts understandable to a cautious, parapsychologically trained physician. As natural scientists we desire an explanation or at least a working hypothesis of

so-called "occult" phenomena. We find it in the psychic, and believe that along with the conscious and the subconscious there is at least a third stratum, the superconscious. The psi-factor could be a function of the superconscious. Such states as the strange sensation of lucidity, of eternity, together with a profound feeling of happiness resemble descriptions by mystics of the "apex mentis," the "spark of the soul," the trance of mediums or even the "ecstasy" accompanying stigmata, in all of which extra- and super-natural phenomena may occur. These are similar and partially identical with some parapsychological phenomena, and their relationships offer a wide and productive field of study, especially for physicians. Parapsychology implies an extension of the physician's spiritual horizons, as did the field of depth-psychology. The theory here called "height psychology" (Frankl) is an important counterbalance to depth psychology. These disciplines should be taught in the universities.

The words of a song: "The physician is no Christian," may be slightly exaggerated but not surprising in view of today's university curricula. There will be little change until the rich, supersensory content of the Bible and other literature is taken seriously by physicians. This would imply teaching of an anthropology that includes the soul and spirit of man. According to a tradition thousands of years old, man is *corpus, anima* and *spiritus*. Any discipline claiming to be called "human medicine" must consider all three. If human medicine is to be more than veterinary medicine, consideration of the whole man is essential. In this consideration lies the connecting-link between parapsychology and psychiatry.