

Psychoanalysis and Psi

The relationship between the fields of psychoanalysis and psi research is somewhat ambivalent. Psychoanalysts have frequently reported cases of telepathic interaction and precognition occurring between patient and practitioner. However, in common with psychologists, most psychoanalysts are unwilling to acknowledge or explore these phenomena for fear of being considered unscientific. Few psychoanalytic writings deal with the topic directly: terms such as 'telepathy' and 'psi phenomena' are not found in psychoanalysis dictionaries.^{[1] [2]} In recent years the topic has received more attention, but resistance to the subject within the field remains strong.^[3]

This article summarizes the views and activities of some of key individuals in the field of psychoanalysis who have taken psi phenomena seriously.

Pierre Janet (1859-1947)

Pierre Janet, a professor of philosophy in Le Havre, wrote his doctoral dissertation on hallucinatory phenomena and the mechanisms of perception. Through Dr Gibert, he met Léonie, a woman who he found could be hypnotized remotely, obeying mental suggestions made from a distance of up to two kilometers. After becoming entranced, Léonie would perform a task that had been communicated to her mentally. Janet described his observations in the context of Frederic Myers's ideas about the Subliminal Self and trance states,^[4] and presented them to the Society of Physiological Psychology of Paris. This caused a stir in international psi research circles, and in 1886 the British Society for Psychical Research sent a team to Le Havre, including Myers and his physician brother, Henry Sidgwick, Julian Ochorowicz, and Janet's uncle, Charles Richet, to attend remote suggestion sessions with Léonie.^[5]

Despite their spectacular results – or perhaps because of them – Janet abandoned these experiments, alarmed by the anxious reaction they caused among academic psychologists, which he realized could only hinder his ambitions in orthodox medicine. He now distanced himself from his work with Léonie, and even took to berating those in the psi research community who cited it as evidence of a psychical process. On the contrary, he now declared, for some time he'd 'doubted the interpretation of the facts and was disposed to criticize them myself, regarding them as a simple departure from more profound studies'.^[6]

From now on, Janet confined his activities to the exploration of the less controversial effects of hypnosis and suggestion. Through his clinical work at the Salpêtrière hospital in Paris, he discovered what he called 'psychological automatism',^[7] an unconscious activity that can be liberated in a hypnotic state. He viewed it as underpinning ordinary consciousness, disturbing and even sometimes invading it.^[8] This is close to Myers's ideas^[9] and the ideas later developed by Sigmund Freud.^[10]

Janet also emphasized the automatic and regressive character of bizarre phenomena arising under hypnosis, comparing them to the ravings of delirium. For him, they appeared to indicate a disintegration of the personality, and he treated them as symptoms of pathology.^[11] A later psychoanalyst and psi researcher Jule Eisenbud wrote:

One may well be surprised that Janet and others did not follow this preliminary work with all sorts of experimental variations and correlative studies, especially when such a rare and willing subject as Léonie lay to hand. But this illustrates as well as anything the tremendous, covert resistance of even psychiatrists to the subject. A hit-and-run attitude has characterized a good deal of the work done generally in parapsychology, and with very few exceptions psychiatrists who have touched so-called phenomena have made single contributions and have been retired from the field.^[12]

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939)

Freud's public positions on telepathy were hesitant and ambivalent. In his early writings he vigorously refuted its existence,^[13] seeking to explain away instances of seemingly psychic operation. In one case he described a dream of a young patient that she took to be a premonition of something that later occurred in reality. He concluded that the dream had actually occurred after the event, and that it brought to her conscious mind knowledge of the event, which had previously been 'censored'.^[14]

He also commented on a case sent by a colleague, in which two individuals appeared to interact telepathically. He considered that they had been exposed to a stimulus that had provoked a precisely similar association of ideas in each

simultaneously, leading to the same thought. He concluded: 'What promised to be a supernatural manifestation was thus easily explained on a normal basis'.^{[15] [16]}

Gradually, Freud came to accept the occurrence of telepathy, albeit reluctantly, concerned that it would bring suspicion and disfavor on psychoanalysis as a scientific activity. He called it the only allegedly paranormal entity that contained a 'kernel of truth' amid the 'black tide of mud of occultism'^[17] (the term often used for psi phenomena at this time). Later in his career he showed particular interest in telepathy in dreams,^[18] discussing the subject directly in four papers: *Psychoanalysis and Telepathy* (1921), *Dream and Telepathy* (1921), *The Occult Significance of Dreams* (1925), and *Dream and Occultism* (1932).

His interest was piqued by the attention given to such phenomena by two colleagues, Carl Jung and Sandor Ferenczi. He undertook to investigate psychics personally, aided on different occasions by Ferenczi and Freud's daughter Anna. In 1910 he went with Ferenczi to visit a Berlin fortune-teller, Frau Seidler, who gave readings blindfolded. Freud observed that she appeared able to guess his thoughts by a 'physiologic gift', and although her statements were not completely accurate he attributed the misunderstandings to distortions that must inevitably occur in the telepathic process.^[19] But, as always, Freud adhered to his habitual skepticism and proposed they engage in further experiments.

Ferenczi, by contrast, was enthusiastic about their findings and planned to speak publicly on the topic at the next Congress of Psychoanalysis. He also confided to Freud that he believed he had mediumistic abilities. Freud was 'earthshaken', and begged him to reconsider.

I would like to request that you continue to research in secrecy for two full years and don't come out until 1913; then, certainly, in the *Jahrbuch*, openly and aboveboard. You know my practical reasons against it and my secret painful sensitivities.^[20]

In 1911 Freud joined the British and American Societies for Psychical Research. The following year he published a paper in the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research* introducing his concept of the unconscious.^[21]

In 1920 a colleague, Wilhelm Stekel, published a monograph on telepathic dreams reported by patients during World War I. Stekel emphasized the effect of the sleeping state in facilitating telepathy, also the role played by strong emotions such as anxiety, jealousy and love. The publication of Stekel's book prompted Freud in turn to tackle the delicate problem of telepathy.^[22]

Writing in 1922, Freud described how a patient dreamed that his second wife gave birth to twins, on the very night that Freud's daughter (by his first wife) gave birth to twins, a month earlier than expected. Freud felt that telepathy was involved here. He further considered that the dream showed the patient's repressed sexual desire for his daughter, and since the telepathic perception might have brought this to his conscious mind, an internal censor changed 'daughter' to 'wife'. The case proved to him that 'telepathic material obeys the same defense mechanisms as those involved in the dream-work'.^[23] He also thought it demonstrated the bond between mind and body shown in trance states.

Freud's Later Writings

In *PsychoAnalysis and Telepathy* (1933), Freud described the case of a patient who consulted an astrologer. The astrologer had previously given a reading for the man's brother-in-law, predicting that he would die from food poisoning caused by oysters sometime in July and August. The man did not die, but had in fact nearly died from oyster poisoning the previous August.^[24] Here, Freud emphasized the role of the unconscious as a bridge between conscious mind and body, commenting that psychoanalysis, by revealing this, had prepared the way for the acceptance of such processes as telepathy.^[25]

Freud followed Stekel in emphasizing the role of emotions, affect and transference in the transmission and reception of telepathic material, writing:

I have often had an impression, in the course of experiments in my private circle, that strongly emotionally colored recollections can be successfully transferred without much difficulty... On the basis of a number of experiences I am inclined to draw the conclusion that thought-transference of this kind comes about particularly easily at the moment at which an idea emerges from the unconscious, or, in theoretical terms, as it passes over from the 'primary process' to the 'secondary process'.^[26]

Referring to his own clinical cases, Freud theorized about the rules underlying telepathic processes. Here, he anticipated the ideas of later psychoanalysts, seeing telepathic communication as a return to an archaic, pre-language mode of

functioning.

One is led to a suspicion that this is the original, archaic method of communication between individuals and that in the course of phylogenetic evolution it has been replaced by the better method of giving information with the help of signals which are picked up by the sense organs. But the older method might have persisted in the background and still be able to put itself into effect under certain conditions – for instance, in passionately excited mobs.^[27]

Freud further held that

- telepathic material operates according to the laws of the unconscious, revealing strongly repressed desires that can be ‘exhumed’ by a psychic
- strong emotions play a large role in causing telepathic occurrences
- the psychic dynamic facilitating the emergence of telepathic material is that which governs the constitution of dreams, involving the same activity and defense mechanisms
- psychoanalysis can account for these phenomena and analyze them

Despite the ambivalence he often expressed in discussing telepathy, Freud sometimes took a clear position. When Jones begged him not to state his views publicly he responded that his own tests had been so convincing that diplomatic considerations had to give way. Here as with so much else, he said, he had to risk proclaiming a conviction without getting any agreement from the outside world. He added

When anyone adduces my fall into sin, just answer him calmly that conversion to telepathy is my private affair like my Jewishness, my passion for smoking and many other things, and that the theme of telepathy is in essence alien to psychoanalysis.^[28]

Sandor Ferenczi (1873-1933)

Sandor Ferenczi was a Hungarian psychoanalyst and one of Freud’s closest colleagues. Incidents early in his career convinced him of the reality of psychic phenomena. His first published article concerned his own experiments with automatic writing, in which, after some unsuccessful attempts, he found himself writing an injunction to offer an article on spiritualism for the magazine *Gyógyászat*, with the assurance that its editor would be responsive. This proved to be the case.^[29]

At a spiritist séance some weeks later, Ferenczi wrote on a piece of paper the name of a patient he was to meet later in the day and asked the medium to reveal what that person was doing right now. The medium sensationally replied that the individual had just sat down on his bed and asked for a glass of water, then collapsed and died. This also turned out to be true.^[30]

For Ferenczi, ‘so-called occult phenomena have nothing supernatural about them and are actually the manifestations of the unconscious psychic abilities of man’.^[31]

Ferenczi discussed these matters with Freud when the two became acquainted in 1908. At this time he was hesitant to endorse the phenomenon officially as transmission of thought. But he nevertheless recognized a process where a patient may unconsciously pick up or ‘introject’ ideas and images being ‘projected’ by the unconscious mind of the analyst. He encouraged Freud to acknowledge these occurrences, doubting that they would have the negative impact on the reputation of psychoanalysis that Freud feared.^{[32] [33]}

As described above, Freud tried to temper Ferenczi’s enthusiasm. Ferenczi obliged by not publishing further on the subject, but he continued to note instances of psychic interactions between patient and therapist. His strong commitment and curiosity influenced a generation of Hungarian analysts to take an interest in the phenomenon. He carried out further work on the concept of transference and countertransference, and on dissociation as a reaction to trauma.^[34]

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961)

Jung came into contact with spiritism and the occult at an early age, through his family’s interests.^[35] In 1898, he studied the clairvoyance of his cousin Hélène Preiswerk for his medical thesis on ‘the psychology and pathology of so-called occult phenomena’.^[36]

Jung understood psi phenomena in terms of his concept of synchronicity, the occurrence of a meaningful coincidence in time, especially those that arise during analysis in the context of transference or countertransference.^[37] Typically, he considered, an archetypal image forces itself into the psyche of a subject and emerges in external reality or in the psyche of a close relative. As a non-causal conception of the psyche and existence, synchronicity is very different from Freudian conceptions centered on principles of causality and action/reaction.^[38] We speak of synchronicity where no causal link can be found between two facts that correspond between an internal state and external reality.

Jung took the clinical episode of the ‘golden scarab’ as his original model:

My example concerns a young woman patient who, in spite of efforts made on both sides, proved to be psychologically inaccessible. The difficulty lay in the fact that she always knew better about everything... After several fruitless attempts to sweeten her rationalism with a somewhat more human understanding, I had to confine myself to the hope that something unexpected and irrational would turn up...

I was sitting opposite her one day, with my back to the window, listening to her flow of rhetoric. She had had an impressive dream the night before, in which someone had given her a golden scarab — a costly piece of jewelry. While she was still telling me this dream, I heard something behind me gently tapping on the window. I turned round and saw that it was a fairly large flying insect that was knocking against the window-pane... I opened the window immediately and caught the insect in the air as it flew in. It was a scarab beetle... whose gold-green color most nearly resembles that of a golden scarab. I handed the beetle to my patient with the words: Here is your scarab. This experience punctured the desired hole in her rationalism and broke the ice of her intellectual resistance. The treatment could now be continued with satisfactory results.^[39]

Jung distinguishes three types of synchronicities:

- the correspondence of the observer’s psychic state with a simultaneous, objective, external situation, echoing that state and its content, but where there is no causal relationship between the psychic state and the external event
- the concurrence of a psychic state with an external event that takes place outside the observer's field of perception, at another location, and that is verifiable only after the fact
- the concurrence of a psychic state with a not-yet-determined future event that is distant in time and verifiable after the fact^[40]

Such concurrences tend to appear during periods of change and crisis, such as love relationships, birth and bereavement. They also appear during psychoanalytic treatment, where identical themes emerge simultaneously in the psyches of analyst and patient. Jung said he often encountered such cases, and saw how significant these inner experiences were to his patients. He was ‘amazed’ at how many people had had experiences of this kind, and how carefully they kept them secret, for fear of exposing themselves to ridicule.^[41]

Post-1945

In 1953, the first parapsychological Congress was held in Utrecht in the Netherlands, where Eisenbud, Servadio, Ehrenwald and Ullman^[42] all presented papers on psi phenomena in the context of psychiatry and psychoanalysis. The same year, Devereux published ‘Psychoanalysis and the Occult’ an anthology that ‘invites psychoanalysts to work hard, to think soberly and to let the chips fall where they may’,^[43] contributors include Deutsch,^[44] Eisenbud, Hitschmann^[45] Hollòs,^[46] Róheim,^[47] Servadio,^[48] Burlingham,^[49] Fodor,^[50] and Gillespie.^[51] Most report telepathic dreams or telepathic sight during the analytic setting, stressing the role played by the analyst’s unconscious as well as the patient’s, and the context of intense emotion.

Istvan Hollòs (1872-1957)

Istvan Hollòs, a Hungarian psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, gathered examples of telepathy and precognition from more than 500 patients and colleagues, which he used to understand the psychodynamic context of psi phenomena. He considered a telepathic interaction to have occurred whenever a strictly personal idea in the mind of the analyst is expressed by the patient seconds later. Clearly, there is a need to exclude the possibility of it having been communicated by the normal senses, also that it was not the end result of an identical chain of associations between analyst and patient.

Hollòs also emphasized the role of narcissistic wounds, affects, and repressed desires in the emergence of these phenomena. Vulnerability on the part of the analyst, when preoccupied with other thoughts, might be a contributing factor.^[52]

Emilio Servadio (1904-1995)

Servadio, a founder of psychoanalysis in Italy, identified certain conditions he believed were optimal, if not actually necessary for the production of telepathy: the process was entirely unconscious, aided by sleep, hypnotic states and drugs, and involved a powerful emotional investment on the part of the patient.

Servadio believed telepathic and precognitive dreams occur when the defense mechanisms guarding the subject's emotional life are compromised. The patient then regresses to an 'archaic' stage of communication.^[53] He itemized factors he believed were involved, as follows:

In a typical telepathic event during sleep, we usually find an emotional (transference) tie between two people; a singular emotional event of an objective or subjective sort; conditions adverse to better communication (distance, helplessness, inhibitions, repression); the necessity of defeating them; and finally, the condition of sleep which is regressive and which favors the reinstatement of archaic means of thought expression, such as dreams.^[54]

Jule Eisenbud (1908-1998)

Jule Eisenbud was an American psychoanalyst and paranormal investigator, best known for his investigation of the 'thoughtography' of Ted Serios. Like Freud and Servadio, Eisenbud stressed that telepathic material could enter the unconscious mind and be transformed in the manifest content of a person's dream.

Eisenbud wrote articles discussing telepathy in a therapeutic context, and the conditions likely to cause it to appear. For him, as for others, the preoccupations of the analyst play a major role, both by prompting a telepathic event, and as the object of the telepathic perception. He concurred that frustration could cause psi phenomena to emerge. He writes:

The telepathic 'episode' is a function not only of the repression of emotionally charged material by the patient, but of the repression of similar or related emotionally charged material by the analyst as well.^[55]

Echoing Freud's view of dreams, Eisenbud thought of psi phenomena as a 'royal road' for exploring the unconscious both of patient and analyst, and stressed the importance of considering it during analysis. He also observed cross correspondences in the dreams of different patients who did not know each other.^[56]

Eisenbud believed telepathy and dream telepathy can provide useful information with regard to transference and countertransference, and focused on it to explore aspects of his patient's dreams.^[57] Should the analyst give the patient his interpretation of the telepathic material? He considered it was important to do so, as this 'revelation' could help to establish a transference, or re-establish a transference which is blocked, as shown by others psychoanalysts.^[58] Eisenbud also studied Ted Serios, a man who could imprint mental images on Polaroid film (thoughtography).

Michael Balint (1896-1970)

Michael Balint was a Hungarian psychoanalyst who spent most of his life in Britain. Balint too stressed the role of the analyst in causing psi to appear in interactions with patients. He considered that an analyst who is preoccupied with some personal issue, but who fails to communicate it to the patient, maintains 'a façade of professional hypocrisy', pretending to devote his attention to his patient without in fact doing so. The patient unconsciously senses this, leading to (unconscious) feelings of frustration and even anger. In Balint's view, some patients unconsciously resolve the problem by administering a 'therapeutic shock' through a telepathic incident, bringing the analyst down to earth.^[59]

For Balint, for benefit from such situations requires a change of attitude on the part of the analyst. He writes: 'Perhaps we analysts ought to accept the role of pioneers in this field, as we have had some experience of what it means to make defenses conscious. If we succeed in relinquishing the professional hypocrisy surrounding parapsychological phenomena, we might get to grips with the underlying real problem, what the true nature and function of ESP is.'^[60]

Jan Ehrenwald (1900-1988)

Jan Ehrenwald was a Czech-born American psychoanalyst who actively studied the emergence of psi phenomena in therapy. He listed four elements as the basis of a neurophysiological model:

1) The extension hypothesis: psi phenomena are compensatory extensions of a 'minus function', deficient motor and sensory faculties.

2) The symbiotic or gradual decline of psi faculties in the child, who must renounce the mother-infant relationship in order to learn under social and family pressure to formulate his demands by means of language.

3) The *psi syndrome*, of which ESP and PK are aspects. The psi syndrome is vital for the survival of the infant, who communicates to its mother information that far exceeds what can be conveyed by gestures or cries. Only the mother can decode these signals and understand the baby's feelings.

4) The existential shift, the context and the circumstance that permit the occurrence of psi event. This shift from ordinary consciousness to non-ordinary consciousness can be induced by sleep (dreaming), hypnosis, drugs, or, in a psychoanalytic context, frustration and anger.^[61]

Ehrenwald concluded that telepathy is the first means of communication, originating in this early symbiosis, and that it has archaic character as a primary process. These characteristics are constantly present in telepathy occurring in psychoanalytic therapy. It follows that at crucial moments the psychoanalyst must take on the role of the archaic mother. He writes: 'We must assume that every telepathic incident involves the temporary fusion of two emotionally linked individuals into one functional unit, re-establishing for a fleeting moment the original mother-child unit as it existed at an early developmental stage.'^[62]

Ehrenwald was the first to apply the psi hypothesis to the understanding of paranoid psychosis. Paranoid hostility is a resurgence of the struggle of the child against the invasion of his personality by the maternal psyche. If the telepathic bond fails, the mother, no longer perceiving her child's real internal experience, projects onto him material which is heterogeneous to his psyche, and against which he struggles. In early life this struggle can take several forms, one of which is autism. In adolescents and young adults, a similar process occurs, where the individual is no longer able to guard against unconscious psychic material bursting into his psyche from other people.

Others

After this rich and productive period, there was a hiatus during which relatively little was published in relation to psi and psychoanalysis. Then in 1975, two psychiatrists, Nicole Gibrat^[63] and Christian Moreau, presented papers to a parapsychology conference.^[64] In 1983, Granoff & Rey published *L'occulte, objet de la pensée freudienne*, in which they discussed Freud's paper on 'psychoanalysis and telepathy'.

Dream Telepathy in the Laboratory

In experimental studies carried out in a dream laboratory at the Maimonides Medical Center in New York, Ullman and Krippner demonstrated the possibility of influencing a person's dream under rigorous sleep-lab conditions.^[65] Among other findings, the researchers confirmed processes that were identified by earlier telepathy researchers such as Rene Warcollier,^[66] and later ones such as Djohar Si Ahmed.^[67]

Psychoanalysis on the Margins of Psi Phenomena

By this time, even the limited interest shown by some psychoanalysts in psi as a paranormal phenomenon had faded. However, in recent decades new developments within the field have touched upon the subject, although without being properly explored.

Some psychoanalysts talk casually of telepathy as if its reality was self-evident. For instance Françoise Dolto affirms that mother-child telepathy is well known to all mothers: a woman may be aroused from a sound sleep by her baby merely stirring in its cot in the next room, while being oblivious to other sounds – a fact that amazes fathers.^[68]

Similarly, Michèle Montrelay states: 'Transmission of thought is for us psychoanalysts a fact so common and familiar, we don't even think about it.'^[69]

Mother-Infant Relationship

Psychoanalysts sometimes theorize about archaic unconscious movements involving psi phenomena, but without naming it as such. For instance, Wilfred Bion proposes a model of the mother-child relationship in which regular exchanges occur that might be described as telepathic, although he does not term it as such.^[70] The infant, as yet unable to express its needs and wants by physical means, projects them in the psyche of the mother. These *beta elements*, as Bion terms them, are then assimilated by the mother and transformed into *alpha elements* before being projected back to the

child, helping it to construct its own thought-thinking apparatus. As the child gains maturity, a 'membrane' acts as a natural barrier preventing such exchanges. However, the membrane is permeable and can be breached at critical moments of emotional overload, for instance during analysis when the patient is reliving a traumatic experience.^[71] In such a case, the exchange takes the form of an urgent request to the analyst to 'pre-digest' the material, as the mother did during infancy, and transform it into a thought than can be expressed.

Didier Anzieu has built on Bion's 'membrane' idea to develop his own conception, using terms such as 'skin-ego',^[72] 'psychic envelopes',^[73] 'thought containers',^[74] and 'psychic barriers. He asserts that the skin ego is both bodily and psychic, its formation depending on early infant-mother interaction, skin contact being the primary means of communication between them. If the psychic barrier misfunctions, materials can leak from one psyche to another, a failing that can occur in the analytic setting. For such patients Anzieu proposes a 'transitional psychoanalysis' specially adapted to help compensate these shortcomings.^[75]

Similarly, Ehrenwald underlined 'mother-child symbiosis', cradle of ESP.^[76]

The perception by psychoanalysts of telepathic interactions as a regression to the archaic level of mental functioning may be one reason why they avoid it. Their work largely aims to repair damage that occurred during the earliest stages of an individual's life, and the sudden occurrence of a telepathic event during analysis represents a dangerous regression: it implies that the psyches of patient and analyst have become mutually transparent, threatening to compromise the analyst's healing ability.

Psychoanalysts and ESP Today

A common characteristic of much recent theorizing since the 1970s has been to implicitly confirm the emergence of psychic transmission in the analytic setting but to avoid identifying it as such. The theme appears constantly in discussions of dynamics of groups, trans-generational transmission^[77] and the like; however, the authors almost always avoid explicitly tackling the subject and never once utter the word telepathy. It is buried in descriptive terms such as projective and introjective identification, unconscious transmission, anomalous communication, alpha function and maternal reverie,^[78] psychic disturbance,^[79] therapeutic symbiosis,^[80] psychoanalytic co-thinking,^[81] paradoxical system,^[82] chimera,^[83] primitive communication,^[84] and so on.

For instance, Kaës talks about the contents of the unconscious that 'transit from one subject to another' according to 'non-arbitrary mediations': they are 'deposited, hosted, encrypted, decrypted, and transmitted, with transformations of various amplitudes'.^[85] Others speculate about the paths taken by this mode of communication, and how this relates to the conceptual background of contemporary physics,^[86] again, without referring to telepathy.

However, a few psychoanalysts consider the paranormal to be an aspect of mental functioning and write about it openly.^[87]^[88] Didier Dumas has written about telepathic abilities of autistic children.^[89] More recent publications chronologically trace Freud's interest in the links between dreams and telepathy, some also describing personal interactions with their patients to explain the telepathic event.^[90] Gyimesi raised the issue of demarcation, boundaries, and neighborhood between occultism, parapsychology, and psychoanalysis, focusing particularly on the work of Ferenczi.^[91]

As Jule Eisenbud pointed out, 'the so-called occult is no threat to us when we can view it with the comfortable assurance that it has no reality beyond that of the dramatic device. When it brushes by us in life itself, we have another problem on our hands entirely'.^[92] This happened in the case of the American psychoanalyst Elizabeth Lloyd Mayer, who described her own journey of discovery in her book *Extraordinary Knowing* (2008). Shaken by a personal incident involving clairvoyance, Mayer began to explore psi research, and found that many of her psychoanalyst colleagues were willing to talk privately about their own uncanny experiences, both personal and professional.

Transference, countertransference, intersubjectivity, telepathy and the process of psychotherapy, are in the core of those papers, but, as Rosenbaum wrote, as with the proverbial blind men describing an elephant, psychoanalysis and psi research each provide a different perspective on the same phenomena – the nature of the unconscious, nonverbal communication and attunement, and mental states residing at the far reaches of a continuum of empathy and intuition. Moreover, certain aspects of psychotherapy with the psychotic patient, which often require of the therapist a greater fluency with both his own and the patient's primary process experience, can be brought into sharper focus through the lens of psi phenomena.^[93]

Resistance

Professional resistance to mention of psi within the field is also overt. Many authors describe a situation in which practitioners show interest privately, but refuse to speak of it in public for fear of being considered unscientific and losing credibility with peers.^[94] A further likely cause of resistance is the reaction to the frightening possibility that a patient appears to have access to intimate private thoughts.

In one instance, a well-known psychoanalyst reported a remarkable case of telepathic perception: a patient experienced a vivid vision of an accident that involved a member of her family at the moment it was taking place. Asked if this example could be reported in a PhD thesis, the analyst replied: 'No way! What would my colleagues say if I allowed such a thing to be published?'^[95]

In 1973, psychoanalyst Robert Stoller wrote a paper in which he related telepathic dreams experienced both by himself and by his patients, showing an 'uncanny interconnectedness' with situations in his personal life. His supervisor Ralph Greenson was likewise flabbergasted, but advised him not to publish these observations in order not to damage his career.^[96]

Some analysts reject the possibility and close their minds to it, to the point that some patients may come to realize, even after long and fruitful analysis, they have never been able to address it, submitting to what Ehrenwald calls 'doctrinal compliance'.^[97] A psychoanalyst may be shocked by an episodic telepathic or premonitory occurrence in the analytic setting, but not discuss it beyond the private circle.

The psi event remains the 'other dark continent of psychology inquiry'.^[98] But psychoanalysts may not always be able to banish it from their professional practice. As Derrida wrote: 'it is difficult to imagine a theory of what they call the unconscious without a theory of telepathy. They can be neither confused nor dissociated'.^[99]

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