

Correspondence

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THE PSYCHIATRIST IN SEARCH OF A SCIENCE

DEAR SIR,

May I be permitted to make two comments on the admirable paper by Dr. Eliot Slater? (*Journal* (1972), 121, 591-8).

(a) Summarizing Frederick Golla's reply to Mapother's address, though critical of its conclusions, Dr. Slater states that 'no amount of scientific data could help us ultimately to know a personality . . .'. It was Jaspers in particular who had, in his *Allgemeine Psychopathologie* drawn attention to the fact that 'it is a mistake when investigating the individual to act as if all our knowledge of him lay at one level, as if we had him before us as an object, a single thing which we could know as a whole in its causes and effects'. Following Kantian lines of thought, Jaspers argued that 'if there were an empirical finality of human existence and it could be classed wholly as a form of Being which we could explore, there would be no freedom'. The definiteness of this conclusion arises out of the assertion which it seems to involve that 'the attempt to grasp the individual finally and entirely as a whole is bound to fail'.

In this context one may well refer to the work of Scheler (man is not a thing but rather 'a direction of movement of the universe itself'), and especially Husserl's famous Crisis lecture in which he criticised the ideal of modern science, namely that of *mathematization of nature*. Husserl expressed such a position when he noted that the possibility of achieving an objective science of the world might suggest to us 'the idea of a nature which is constructively determinable in the same manner in all its *other aspects*'. It is precisely this mathematization or objectification of the subject that, according to Husserl, constitutes the crisis of European humanity.

(b) Dr. Slater's statement that 'for a fundamental and enduring advance, the empiricist has to explain the phenomena of a higher level as implied by the simpler and more secure laws of a lower level' seems to get support from N. Hartmann's law of categorical stratification. The idea of a stratified world gives, according to Hartmann, rise to different levels or

strata of Being, which correspond to the distinction between corporeal things, organic bodies, physical life, etc. What we are entitled to assert in this hierarchy of forms is that the 'higher' levels rest upon the 'lower' ones, and that, according to Hartmann's law of recurrence, the lower categories are retained in the higher ones as their elements, but not vice-versa. The most important point, therefore, of Dr. Slater's exposition of his problem in this part of his paper seems to be confirmed by Hartmann's conclusion that 'where a higher stratum rears itself above a thoroughly determined lower one, it brings its own determination with it without suspending that of the lower stratum'.

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'THE RUNNING TREATMENT'

DEAR SIR,

Referring to Dr. Orwin's article in the February number of the *Journal* (122, 175-9), I should like to suggest that another possible mechanism for the relief of anxiety by vigorous exercise may be the mobilization of liver glycogen and correction of low blood sugar. Many mild cases of hypoglycaemia have typical phobic anxiety symptoms.

There may be other mechanisms as well that would repay study. I remember how, when I couldn't concentrate on the necessary cramming for exams in medical school, running around the block a few times, or reading while walking vigorously, would