

A SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

By THE NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

What the National Research Council concluded after reviewing some "New Age" technologies being

The Army Research Institute in 1984 asked the National Academy of Sciences to form a committee to examine the potential value of certain techniques that had been proposed to enhance human performance. As a class, these techniques were viewed as extraordinary, in that they were developed outside the mainstream of the human sciences and were presented with strong claims for high effectiveness. The committee was also to recommend general policy and criteria for future evaluation of enhancement techniques by the Army.

The Committee on Techniques for the Enhancement of Human Performance first met in June 1985. The 14 members of the committee were appointed for their expertise in areas related to the techniques examined. The disciplines they represent include experimental, physiological, clinical, social, and industrial psychology and cognitive neuroscience; one member is a training program director from the private sector.

During the next two years, the committee gathered six times, met in toto or in part on several occasions with various representatives of the Army, conducted inter-



ENHANCING HUMAN

explored for use by the U.S. Army, and why its findings on parapsychology are less than acceptable to many working in the field

Is the National Research Council's 1988 report on *Enhancing Human Performance* another "Condon Report"? More than 20 years ago, the U.S. Air Force commissioned the University of Colorado to study the issues concerned with unidentified flying objects (UFOs). This 1968 study came to be known by its chairman's name, Dr. Edward Condon, a well-known physicist who served as the director of the National Bureau of Standards from 1945 to 1951 and who had held several other important academic, industrial, and government posts. The Condon Report "officially" discounted the existence of UFOs.

Predictably, the National Academy of Sciences convened a panel immediately after the report appeared that endorsed the report's findings and its methodology. Deputy Director of the Stanford University Center for Space Science and Astrophysics Dr. Peter Sturrock has noted, however, that whereas most prominent

scientists, in their public statements, tend to downplay the significance of UFOs, many of them privately question the Condon Report and other official statements on the matter. These dissenting views were expressed to the House Committee on Science and Astronautics in 1968, and in subsequent books and book reviews of the Condon Report by Chiu, Hynek, Jacobs, Keuttner, McDonald, and others.

Nevertheless, the Condon Report still stands today as the authoritative work in the field. During the two decades since its publication, the findings of the Condon Report have been conveniently cited by anyone wishing to stop UFO research, who has only to refer to the report and explain, "The subject has already been evaluated and there is nothing to it." It's an easy way out for those nay-sayers because Dr. Condon's reputation is strong, the source of the commissioning lofty, and the report's conclusions so acceptable to conventional wisdom that few are willing

A CHALLENGE TO THE



views and site visits and sent subcommittees on several others, and commissioned 10 analytical and survey papers. The committee also examined a variety of materials, including state-of-the-art reviews of relevant literature, reports commissioned by the Army Research Institute, and unpublished documents provided by institutes, practitioners, and researchers. The report . . . describes the committee's activities, findings, and conclusions. . . .

Many of the techniques under consideration grew out of the human potential movement of the 1960s, including guided imagery, meditation, biofeedback, neuro-

linguistic programming, sleep learning, accelerated learning, split-brain learning, and various techniques to reduce stress and increase concentration. Many of these techniques have gained popularity over the past two decades, promoted by persons eager to provide answers to problems of human performance or to prosper from them. While often using the language of science to justify their approach, these promoters are for the most part not trained professionals in the social and behavioral sciences. Nonetheless, they do appeal to basic needs for human performance, and
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PERFORMANCE

to challenge it without some strong motivation.

A recent report with similar lofty credentials has now been published in the field of human potential, and those of us who seek to employ the new techniques for training and education described therein, or who wish to see the U.S. Army pursue many of the "New Age" ideas it investigated, will similarly have to fight to overcome the conclusions of this report. This will be especially true for those who are endeavoring to bring those techniques and thinking into use within traditional organizations, such as most military, commercial, or educational establishments.

The name of the report is *Enhancing Human Performance* (EHP). It was prepared by the National Research Council (NRC) of the National Academy of Sciences under a contract from the U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral Sciences (sometimes known as ARI), and published in 1988. The NRC's commission was to

conduct a two-year study (at a cost of nearly \$500,000) to review technologies being explored by the Army for enhancing human performance, including psychic research.

The EHP Report found that virtually all further research in the selected areas of its inquiry would be worthless, except for sleep learning, which the committee concluded deserved a second look. In those areas in which they concluded that any benefits were, in fact, derived, these findings were attributed to some normal transfer mechanism, such as body language or extra attention to trainees, and not to the merits of the discipline reviewed. There was a very strong flavor of "nothing novel here" pervading the report.

The field of parapsychology was hit head on. As stated by EHP Committee Chairman John A. Swets at the press conference introducing the report, "Perhaps our strongest conclusions are in the area of parapsychology. The committee finds no

scientific justification from research conducted over a period of 130 years for the existence of parapsychological phenomena." Despite such a wide-sweeping statement, nowhere does the report explain why the "130 years" was chosen. Certainly it is not representative of the dates relevant to the body of research they claim to have reviewed during the study. The EHP committee then went on to recommend that the "best work" ongoing in the field of parapsychology should be monitored.

I'm not sure how the committee found those two statements to be internally consistent: On the one hand, they had disclaimed, in one broad stroke, over a century's worth of psychic investigation; on the other, they were concluding that the best of that discredited research should be monitored. Did they, or did they not, support further parapsychological research?

Obviously, the findings and final report of the NRC's committee are not very comforting or acceptable to those of us who have worked in the field of enhancing human performance. The EHP committee's conclusions have been denounced by no

REPORT

By COL. JOHN ALEXANDER, *U.S. Army, Ret.*

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less than the board of directors of the Parapsychological Association (PA), Inc., the international professional organization of scientists and scholars who study parapsychological, or psychic, phenomena (which may be defined as apparent interactions between the mind and the physical world, such as ESP, clairvoyance, and the like). The PA is an affiliate of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and membership is attained only by formal approval of its council.

The members of the PA were so outraged at what they considered to be distortions and outright errors in the EHP Report that they took the unusual step of commissioning a team to analyze the parts of the EHP Report referring to the work of PA members and to prepare a rebuttal. This rebuttal took the form of a formal 23-page report released late last year (see box on the next page).

I believe that the EHP committee's findings and statements regarding paranormal phenomena reveal a great deal about how it operated as a body and how it arrived at its findings. The weaknesses evident in the committee's conclusions on parapsychology were apparent across the whole range of areas studied. In this article, however, I focus only on the specifics of the committee's findings concerning parapsychology. Researchers in other areas—in particular biofeedback, accelerated learning, and neuro-linguistic programming—have raised similar objections, although less formally than the PA report.

My contentions concerning the parapsychological findings rest on matters relating to the underlying organization of the study's commission and to the composition of its board: namely, that some of its members were known to be *a priori* committed, strongly and publicly, to a negative position on the question they were appointed to evaluate objectively. What could have happened to lead the premier scientific body in the United States to proceed in this manner and to reach such conclusions?

I was a briefer to the NRC committee members as they researched the EHP Report. I have served as chief of Advanced Human Technology for the Army Intelligence and Security Command (1982-84) and, during the preparation of the EHP Report, was director of the Advanced Systems Concepts Office at the U.S. Army Laboratory Command. I believe I am personally well qualified to review the committee's findings.

Committee members had little experience in the areas they were commissioned to examine.

I was aware of the EHP study from its inception in 1984, and I raised doubts about some of its proposed procedures when the contract was being let. From the Army's perspective, going to the NRC was a logical choice for evaluating the various novel approaches to enhancing human performance that the Army had already been exploring. As one of the world's largest training organizations, the Army was a likely agency to study the significance of these crucial techniques. Many organizations in the Army had already been experimenting with various techniques to enhance human performance, and frequently they had reported some very exciting results.

For example, in using NLP modeling techniques, performance in pistol shooting was shown to be markedly improved, while training time and ammunition usage were reduced. Accelerated learning methods had been shown to lead to the acquisition of foreign-language skills in less time and with greater efficiency. Most of those findings were reported as anecdotal data based on subjective input from participants. It therefore made sense to try to determine objectively which of these techniques were worth pursuing on a coordinated basis. In order to get an independent evaluation of the Army's efforts in enhancing human performance, Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel Maxwell Thurman (then a lieutenant general and later a full general and vice chief of staff of the Army) directed that a study be commissioned.

It was felt by several in the top leadership of the Army that contracting such an august body as the NRC (which was estab-

lished in 1916 by the National Academy of Sciences to associate the broad community of science and technology with the Academy's purpose of "furthering knowledge and advising the federal government") would provide a credible report on which the stewardship of the public funds for Army research allocations in the field of enhancing human performance could be based. If there were indeed "better ways of doing business," i.e., improving training, then substantiation was needed.

The task of administering the contract fell to ARI. It was they who proposed that Dr. George Lawrence, a civilian army psychologist with a background in biofeedback, be assigned as the Contracting Officers Technical Representative (COTR). A COTR is normally an unbiased observer who does not participate in the study and who is there to ensure that the study is technically sound.

Unfortunately for those who support enhanced human performance techniques, Lawrence was far from unbiased. He had a prior history in the field—which may be seen in the reference list of the EHP Report—of being firmly and publicly in opposition to several of the areas to be studied. In fact, in a previous assignment with the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), Lawrence had been instrumental in the cancellation of funding for psychic ("psi") research at Stanford Research Institute (SRI). That was in late 1972, when SRI was working with famed psychic Uri Geller. To accomplish that end, Lawrence had gone to SRI with a well-known critic of the psi-research field, Dr. Ray Hyman, a psychology professor at the University of Oregon. After reviewing what they had observed there for DARPA and writing their internal memo, Lawrence and Hyman effectively killed DARPA's funding for SRI, which was the only government-supported research under way in that area at the time.

Prior to the formal organization of the EHP board, Lawrence told me in personal conversation in 1984 that he was seeking approval from the NRC to get Hyman on the EHP committee, an effort at which he proved to be successful. The issue to be raised concerning the credibility of the EHP Report here is that the *only* person assigned to the committee who had had any previous familiarity with the parapsychological research literature was Ray Hyman—who was known from the outset to have his mind already made up. Hyman is a founding member of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the

Paranormal (CSICOP)—or PsiCops as it is known in less friendly terms—the self-appointed vigilante committee that opposes parapsychological research. Hyman's personal views and CSICOP's position on psi research were undoubtedly known, through their many prior publications, to the leadership of ARI and to Lawrence at the time that he set about influencing the constitution of the committee.

Thus, I questioned from the beginning the issues of "bias" and "objectivity" as they related to the committee's constitution. For it seems clear that Lawrence, and then Hyman and James Alcock (another charter CSICOP member and public critic of this research), proceeded on an intentional path to discredit the work in parapsychology. The background of the authors, as well as their "findings," speak for themselves in this regard.

Early on, I discussed the bias of the EHP committee membership with Lawrence and his superiors. My aim was not to remove Hyman from the committee, but rather to include a researcher in the field (or at least a competent scientist who was more open-minded to the existence of parapsychological effects) to balance Hyman's views. The PA also expressed their concern to the NRC and offered to suggest other qualified members to get a more balanced representation on the EHP committee. Senator Claiborne Pell (D. RI), who has long been interested in matters concerning higher human potential, likewise requested that a fair and impartial hearing be afforded and suggested names of competent scientists who might offer a broader perspective. All of these cries fell on deaf ears, and the NRC made the final selection by processes not made public.

It should be made clear that the EHP committee consisted, for the most part, of well-intentioned people. The problem was that they had had very little experience in the specific areas they were commissioned to examine. It was my impression in talking with many members of the EHP committee during the initial briefings that they had no real understanding of the technologies we were describing to them.

Furthermore, several had a vested interest in maintaining a traditional approach, as "new" ideas might conflict with their standing in academic or professional fields. Dr. Peter Sturrock noted in 1977 that mainstream scientists generally made no public criticism of the Condon Report and labeled the subject "not respectable" or an "intellectual poison." But, wrote Sturrock, "a survey of members of the

American Astronomical Society, which permitted members to express opinions under the cloak of anonymity, indicates that scientists are probably more interested in and open-minded towards [UFOs] than one would judge from their public statements." A similar dichotomy between public statement and private thinking may explain why the strong opposition of some critics to psi research has not been publicly contested by other scientists, who, according to the findings of several recent anonymous polls, have shown themselves to be inclined toward, or at least open to, the existence of psi phenomena and the validity of psi research.

Thus, I contend, the study began with a biased CO'TR, a biased committee member, and a basically uninformed committee. Now let's explore how the committee functioned.

The committee's operations comprised a series of early information-gathering briefings by expert witnesses and six meetings, for several days at a time, as a body. There was also considerable informal in-

teraction among the committee members and the briefers, so that, early on, I was able to talk with nearly all the members. In addition, their various subcommittees made a total of ten site visits and conducted twelve additional briefings and interviews. For most of the time during the two-year period, the members of the committee continued to work at their regular occupations.

Upon completion of the study, one or two members of each subcommittee wrote up the findings of their respective subject areas, which were then circulated to the other committee members for their approval—thus providing for consensus. Hyman admits he prepared the first draft of the report's chapter on parapsychology, but he claims that his version was twice as long and more comprehensive than what later appeared. This is somewhat explained by the NRC's internal editing process that cut Hyman's chapter down. (The entire EHP committee had a chance to review that version.)

What happened next, however, to the committee's draft is startling and was only

The Parapsychological Association Concludes That . . .

The [EHP] committee's primary conclusion regarding parapsychology is not merely unjustified by their report, it is directly contradicted by the committee's admission that it can offer no plausible alternatives. This concession, coming as it does from a committee whose principal evaluators of parapsychology were publicly committed to a negative verdict at the outset of their investigation, actually constitutes a strong source of support for the conclusion that parapsychology has identified genuine scientific anomalies.

We have documented numerous instances where, in lieu of plausible alternatives, the committee's attempts to portray parapsychology as "bad science" have been based upon erroneous or incomplete descriptions of the research in question, rhetorical enumeration of alleged "flaws" that by its own admission frequently have no demonstrable empirical consequences, selective reporting of evidence favorable to its case, and the selective omission of evidence not favorable to its case. Moreover, with respect to the committee's central mission for the U.S. Army, we have shown that the committee's prejudice against parapsychology has led it to ignore research, the further development of which could have important implications for our national security.

The scientific and defense communities are entitled to a rigorous and unbiased assessment of this research area. A strong prima facie case has been made for the existence of psi anomalies, and meaningful relationships between such events and psychological variables have been reported in the literature. Further efforts and resources should be expended toward the identification of underlying mechanisms and the development of theoretical models, either conventional or "paranormal," that can provide adequate understanding.

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learned well after the report was published. At a meeting on human technology conducted by the Office of Technical Assessment, I and others had a chance to talk privately with Ray Hyman. He informed us that after the EHP committee finished its draft, its work report was sent to two anonymous committees for review. Those anonymous committee members and the NRC staff further edited the report. Even Hyman does not know who those anonymous editors were. He stated that his draft, while very critical, did not contain the final report's sweeping castigation of all psi research.

Nowhere does the published report mention or imply that anyone other than the people listed in that report participated in the preparation of it, even though the report was in fact edited at one stage by people who had not attended the briefings and meetings or studied the literature. Those anonymous editors had only the written input of the EHP committee and their own preconceptions on which to base their comments. I believe this to be an especially serious methodological flaw in the preparation of the EHP Report.

As I mentioned previously, I was one of the initial briefers of the committee. Our intent was to give the group an overview of the topic areas and of what we had observed previously in the field. The subjects that I covered dealt primarily with published remote viewing data and psychokinesis. My psychokinesis material was based heavily on my research experience, particularly with macro-psychokinesis or metal-bending (PKMB): bending metal with little or no apparent physical force, due ostensibly to a psychic or mental effect.

I personally noted at the time how increasing numbers of physicists and engineers are working in the psi field, in addition to those who actually call themselves "parapsychologists." By excluding physicists, engineers, and many other physical science professionals from the EHP committee, the NRC clearly failed to provide the wider range of expertise needed to explore an area that bridges both the behavioral and the physical sciences and that raises teleological questions concerning the very nature of reality.

Study Chairman Dr. John A. Swets did an excellent job during this briefing phase of reminding the group that they were to keep an open mind on the topics that were to be examined. Ray Hyman, the only committee member to raise questions during my presentation, early on established himself as the group's expert on parapsy-

The committee cited "far-out" applications of parapsychology to denigrate the whole.

chology, a position that the committee members appeared to be glad to relegate to him. He would become their spokesperson in this area of study from that day forward, which is strongly evidenced in the text of the final published report.

Throughout the report's chapter on paranormal phenomena (pp. 169-208), a substantial amount of criticism is referenced to Hyman's prior publications. Thus, it is hard to conceive how this report could be considered unbiased when it was written by one with such a vested interest in supporting his previously stated positions—and whose position on the EHP committee provided him with an opportunity to dismiss so facetly the work of others critical to his own.

Possibly the predisposition of the committee can best be seen in its comment on page 130 that "the claimed phenomena and applications range from the incredible to the outrageously incredible." The members then proceed to discuss the area of "psychic warfare" at some length—an area of applications that has been advanced by very few and is supported by very few others—as if these were mainstream inquiries in parapsychology. I admit, psychotronic weapons lack traditional scientific documentation, and I do not suggest that research projects be carried out in that field. Nevertheless, the EHP committee reached far to pick such fringes to denigrate the whole and gave these applications top billing in the committee statement.

One suggested military application, that

of the "Warrior Monk," was distorted dramatically. A Warrior Monk, as apparently understood by the committee and as cited in the report, is one who would have theoretically mastered "almost all the techniques under consideration by the committee, including the use of ESP, leaving their bodies at will, levitating, psychic healing, and walking through walls." Yet the First Earth Battalion, from which this application was derived, was strictly a notional unit, a brainchild of Lt. Col. Jim Channon that allowed people to think boldly about *possibilities*. The Warrior Monk aspect of Channon's idea chiefly refers to the tradition of combining a spiritual quest with the martial arts, much like the tradition of the samurai. (Specifically, Channon's Warrior Monk would be taught holistic skills that are presently accessible, such as Aikido, proper nutrition, and accelerated learning techniques.) To my knowledge, Channon has never suggested, in any authoritative report, that in the present day we could and would train and field advanced meditators who could perform such feats as the committee describes.

The overall effect of the committee's introducing such "outrageously incredible" and scientifically unsupportable phenomena and applications such as the "anti-missile time warp," the "hyperspatial nuclear howitzer," and an inaccurate claim for the First Earth Battalion into the report's chapter on parapsychology is the provision of further fertile ground for sensationalistic journalists who seek to focus on examples of just how "far out" the Army has gone in its thinking—even when no serious consideration has ever been given to these applications. I believe this is far more damaging to the field of parapsychological investigation than the committee had meant it to be. Nevertheless, the members' decision to include "such colorful examples" as the "context for our agenda" has the subtle (even if it was unintentional) effect of encouraging the reader's suspicion of not only the phenomena presented in the chapter, but also parapsychology in general.

Of even greater concern in the report's parapsychology chapter are the committee's omissions and inaccuracies. For example, the committee asserts on page 171 that "nothing approaching a scientific literature supports the claims for psychotronic weaponry, psychic metal bending, out-of-body experiences, and other potential applications supported by many proponents." This is simply not true, as a number of reputable articles and books have

been published that address out-of-body experiences and PKMB. The committee members should have been aware of the work of Hasted, Isaacs, Houck, Gabbard, Twemlow, and others who have published much credible work in PKMB and out-of-body experiences.

Another specific error is the statement on page 185 that certain experiments in random number generation conducted at the Princeton University Engineering Anomalies Research Laboratory (see the book review of *Margins of Reality*, page 65) had not been published in a refereed journal at the time of the survey. That is patently not true. As most researchers in the field know, those results have been widely published in several professional journals, including the *Proceedings* of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). The chairman of the parapsychology subcommittee was well aware of these publications and had actually published a rebuttal to the IEEE paper previously.

Under the report's sub-heading "Discussion of the Scientific Evidence" (pp. 198-200), the committee distinguishes among three types of scientific criticism that it believes can be used to evaluate a given parapsychological finding: 1) the "smoking gun"—a specific flaw in the research's methodology that by itself can account for the observed finding and thus eliminate the need to propose psi as the cause; 2) the "plausible alternative"—wherein the critic asserts that the result could have been due to some ordinary (non-psi) explanation; and 3) the "dirty test tube"—wherein it is suggested that the results are suspect because "acceptable standards" were not maintained during the conduct of the experiment.

The committee members conclude (p. 200), "We do not have a smoking gun, nor have we demonstrated a plausible alternative." They were therefore left with the "dirty test tube" argument, i.e., that there is some general inadequacy somewhere, that "the best parapsychological experiments fall short" of "the methodological adequacy that they themselves profess." Yet over the "past 130 years"—and long prior to the EHP Report—the experimenters the committee refers to have stated conclusively that they have, in fact, tightened the experimental designs based on prior criticism of their so-called lax protocols and that the data they reported are accurate and valid.

Throughout the parapsychology section of the EHP Report, the committee referred

The report debunks any non-laboratory evidence of psi phenomena.

only to those published articles that supported its position and ignored material that did not. The committee leaned heavily on a report by James Alcock, another CSICOP member, and selections from a report by John Palmer to substantiate its position, thus leaving the reader with the implication that its criticisms of *selected* psi research methodology apply to *all* reports in the paranormal field—which they clearly do not.

Of major concern is a committee-requested supporting report, by researchers Robert Rosenthal and Monica J. Harris, given to me by Dr. Edgar Johnson, technical director of the Army Research Institute (the group that funded the NRC study). Johnson confirmed that Study Chairman John Swets asked that this, the only *favorable* report on a subject studied, be withdrawn from inclusion in the committee's supporting documentation because it was not of "high quality." In reviewing the report co-researched by Rosenthal, an extremely well-regarded Harvard social-science methodologist, I see no basis for such a questionable request.

In addressing non-laboratory evidence for the existence of paranormal phenomena—that is, any human experience outside the laboratory that proponents judge to be convincing—the committee states (p. 202) that it is "wary" of using such concrete, personal experience as a basis for making conclusions. Accordingly, the report goes on to debunk entirely any evidence in support of the paranormal that the committee concludes must have been

generated by "cognitive illusions and strong delusional beliefs," as opposed to evidence that strictly fulfills "scientific criteria." Using PK, or spoon-bending, "parties" as the principal example of how such "beliefs" operate, the committee dismisses the parties as both deception-conducive and bias-conducive, and "not the ideal situation for obtaining reliable observations." The main problem with this argument is that it fails to take into account reports by veridical sources, supported by photographic evidence, of PK.

In private conversation with Ray Hyman, I mentioned a display of PK that I, along with numerous other highly skilled observers, had witnessed at close range. This involved a naive subject who held a fork by the lower end of the stem and did not touch the tines, and still the neck of the fork contorted a full 90 degrees and then moved back toward the original position. It ended at an angle of approximately 45 degrees. While this had not been conducted according to the strict protocols of a "scientific" experiment, nonetheless careful and critical observers all agreed the event had occurred as described.

Hyman's response to me on this occasion was that, while many credible people may have truthfully reported such anecdotal experiences, he does not feel obliged to deal with any findings not appearing in the formal journals, no matter how impressive the reports. (On this point I agree with Braude and others who have argued that the journal literature's ignoring of evidence gathered outside the lab has the effect of missing much potentially significant evidence, in any scientific field.)

I submit that this kind of qualitative evidence should indeed encourage further pursuit and investigation of the existence of psi events. The argument that, to prove the existence of psi, *all* experiments' data must come from the laboratory and be replicable under *all* circumstances is not valid. At present, we do not understand the phenomena well enough to establish all the parameters for experimentation. Thus, to exclude observation of unique events because they are not accomplished in a laboratory setting is very shortsighted; to attack the veracity of the witnesses by suggesting that self-deception has occurred is not a scientific response, whether one is critically investigating psi research in general or conducting the EHP study, specifically.

During an official site visit by the entire EHP committee, this time to the Cleve

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QUARRIES, NOT FORTRESSES

I HAVE JUST READ Dr. Gayle Delaney's comments under the heading of "Jung, Dreams and the Sexes" (Exploring Your Dreams, *New Realities* May/June 1989). What a marvelous overview of so many vitally important aspects of Jung's writings!

I would like to express the opinion that all writings and all teachers be used as "quarries and not as fortresses," as she so succinctly states it. After all, aren't all writings' hypotheses based on the learning and experience of each individual teacher, psychologist, or writer?

Some opened the doors, such as Freud and Jung in the West, Patanjali and Nagarjuna in the East; others, such as Maslow, Mishra, Perls, and Rogers, carried on with synthesizing. However, it is up to each one of us individually to "quarry" what is truly meaningful to us from their writings.

LILA M. MALLETTE
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THE EHP REPORT: A CLARIFICATION

JOHN ALEXANDER'S expression of outrage ("Enhancing Human Performance: A Challenge to the Report," *New Realities*: March/April 1989) at the findings of a Committee of the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council [on the potential for the use of, among other "New Age" technologies, parapsychology in the U.S. Army's personnel training] includes several misunderstandings and misstatements with respect to my role in the enterprise.

My advocacy to NAS/NRC with respect to the inclusion of Professor Hyman as a committee member represented my desire to ensure a credible, knowledgeable, and objective point of view. Membership in CSICOP does not, as Col. Alexander appears to believe, preclude possession of an open mind. Ray Hyman has indeed been (justly) critical of several specific methodologies employed in parapsychological research but has never to my knowledge, publicly or privately, expressed a blanket negativity toward the field as a whole. He has, on the contrary, exhibited an indefatigable interest in serious developments in this area.

Col. Alexander states that the report's reference list reveals me to have been "firmly and publicly in opposition to several of the areas to be studied." My only publications of concern to this committee essentially report on a failed DARPA [the U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency] effort, under my management, to develop uses of biofeedback for enhancement of specific cognitive and motor functions. I remain optimistic that clever work toward this

purpose may someday succeed. I do acknowledge a strongly negative view of Uri Geller's tricks at SRI in the '70s, based upon personal observation.

Col. Alexander's references to the NLP pistol-training study and to the "significant anomalous event" in Clive Backster's laboratory are appalling. As Col. Alexander well knows, the pistol study was riddled with such egregious errors in experimental design and execution as to render its results meaningless, e.g., the NLP group was sent home upon reaching criterion accuracy while the control group of trainees continued; naturally, the latter used more ammunition.

In Backster's laboratory (which the committee visited at my urging), scrapings were taken from a subject's mouth and placed in a beaker. Pictures and sounds were then presented to the subject, who was located several feet from the scrapings and unconnected to them; nothing much happened. A little later on, Col. Alexander enthusiastically noticed an electrical transient recorded from the material in the beaker—the "significant anomalous event," presumably. Since the hypertonic solution into which the material from the subject's mouth had been placed would have lysed whatever cells may have been included, and since unshielded cables (they picked up signals from passing elevators) were used in producing the recordings, any inference of psychic effect drawn from this trivial event is clearly unwarranted.

Col. Alexander's article illuminates once again the two basic problems for evaluation of the validity of research in this area: advocates are frequently naive with regard to standards of inference and the subtle ways in which behavioral experiments can go wrong, and no one yet has identified a psychic effect sufficiently robust to be reproducible upon demand in reasonable laboratory or field conditions.

GEORGE H. LAWRENCE
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Col. Alexander replies:

My article stands as written.

In direct response to George Lawrence's letter, I believe he has substantiated my position in the following ways: As a COTR he influenced the composition of the committee; his negative reports were cited in the EHP report; and he acknowledges negative interaction in the psi work at SRI. Such actions clearly demonstrated his bias on the subject being evaluated.

I have never objected to Ray Hyman being on the [EHP] committee. I objected to his be-

ing the *only* knowledgeable member of that committee. He drafted the EHP Report's chapter on parapsychology; its key words in conclusion are almost identical to those he had published before this study was commissioned. As a founding officer and frequent spokesman for CSICOP, Hyman has long made publicly clear his bias against this work. Yes, I question objectivity.

The experiments with Uri Geller at SRI cannot be passed off as simple tricks. An accurate, detailed response to that interaction was covered years ago in the November 7, 1974 *New Scientist* and recounted in *Mind Reach* (published by Dell) in 1978. I and the principals involved do not agree with Lawrence's inaccurate characterization. (Note that Lawrence brought Ray Hyman to that meeting at SRI as well.)

As Lawrence well knows, the NLP example was not a scientific study, though he continually addresses it as such. Nonetheless, dramatic results were observed. All we claimed is that further study is warranted, but Lawrence has clouded even that modest desire.

Characterization of the event at the Backster laboratory as simply a spurious electrical artifact is preposterous. The demonstration consisted of a jar of white cells from my mouth that had been monitored for more than two hours and showed a highly stable trace. That is, they were stable until the time of a scheduled presentation I gave in the lab, a presentation during which I was very nervous. During the exact time period of my talk, the white cells generated a large erratic electrical signal much greater than any other recorded occurrence that day.

I believe Lawrence has, in effect, suggested that the elevators in that busy building didn't run from 2:30-4:30 p.m., and then ran frantically and continuously only while I was speaking. Also not acknowledged was the fact that the system was sterilized and the experiment repeated the following day, demonstrating that electromagnetic interference was not an issue.

Lawrence's final paragraph typifies the problems I described in my article. He and others continue to ignore the work of Bob Jahn, Brenda Dunne, and others, who have repeatedly—under strict laboratory control—demonstrated statistically significant psi results. (The Princeton work is now over a billion data points.) When do we have to have enough data to get over this hurdle of "there is no evidence"? The data are there, and the experimental protocols long ago passed the point of being "naive".

Finally, "outrage" is his word, not mine [in describing my response to the EHP Report]. My reaction is more sadness and frustration that novel technological approaches have a

very difficult time getting a fair hearing in the hallowed halls of science. That applies to all fields—not just parapsychology.

I submit that the basic issue is fear of the unknown—a trait unworthy of scientists.

IT WORKS!

HOW CAN I MAKE this letter to you editors read like I was actually *talking* to you, and not have it sound self-conscious? Well, for starters, the article you published in the May-June [1989] issue on *Freewriting* has actually proved to be a tool for transformation in my own life.

Since the author's experience and the way she related it was so encouraging, I've been following her suggestions, like reaching for pen and paper in the pre-dawn while I'm still half asleep. And I've just started writing and letting it all hang out; and afterwards, reading the end product has resulted in a real turnaround in mood—from a chronic a.m. depression and feeling of hopelessness—to a sense of well-being and genuine thanksgiving that I *have* been given the gift of loving to write. Which is the author's stated purpose—just to use what we already have.

So, I want to thank you all for making this change possible, which is a minor miracle—and might even be contagious. I will also be looking for some more tools that you folks may have in connection with writing—and certainly hope that the author receives credit for her share in this transformation.

Thanks. I appreciate you all.

KIT HARTING
Washington, D.C.

REPROGRAMMING OR DEPROGRAMMING?

YOUR November/December 1988 copy of *New Realities* has just reached us here in Poona, India, so please forgive this belated reply.

Some of the issues raised in the magazine are fundamental to much of "New Age" thinking, namely whether the New Age phenomenon is a force for radical transformation toward a "New Man," or merely the "Old Man" with a face lift.

Feinstein and Krippner in "Personal Mythology: If It's Not Working Well For You. Revise It," provide an accurate account of the way the "primary role of the myth has always been to carry the past into the present. Through this binding of time, a culture's accumulated knowledge and wisdom are brought to each new generation."

What they are actually describing is the programming of each generation's mind with the values of yesterday—precisely the values that have brought this globe to the brink of destruction. So much for "culture's accumulated knowledge and wisdom"!

Their treatment for what they admit may be an outmoded program is to "revise it." But how can a programmed mind revise its own

program while the mechanism it is using is itself programmed?

This is the fundamental point. Only *deprogramming* can help. Reprogramming is simply adding another layer of conditioning on to the already overburdened mind. In fact, the Eastern notion of "mind" means precisely that complex of secondhand beliefs by which the past controls the present. The Zen no-mind is what *is*, when all this mindstuff is dropped. That is the revolutionary message of meditation.

Meditation is not about "revising" the programming—it is dropping it in its entirety. It is revolutionary, not revisionist.

SWAMI DEVA AMRITO
Poona, India

The editors solicit your comments, reactions, suggestions, queries, and sharings relating to recently published articles and/or magazine-related topics. Address your letters to "Dear New Realities," Heldref Publications, 4000 Albemarle St. NW, Washington, DC, 20016. Include your name, address, and phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.



"Learning is the very essence of humility, learning from everything and from everybody. There is no hierarchy in learning. Authority denies learning and a follower will never learn."

(Krishnamurti's Notebook)

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