

REMOTE VIEWING REVISITED: AN INTRASUBJECT REPLICATION

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ABSTRACT: A long-distance remote-viewing experiment was carried out in replication of a previous successful experiment. One of us remained in Durham, North Carolina, acting as percipient while the other went to Cocoa Beach, Florida, as agent. Ten separate target sites were randomly chosen from a pool of possible sites. The agent then visited a different site for 15 minutes on each of 10 days. At the same times, the percipient recorded her impressions of the agent's location. Later, two judges visited the target sites together and evaluated their correspondence to the percipient's descriptions. Analysis of the results by a direct count-of-permutations method yielded a p of .048 for rankings and a p of .025 for ratings. The topic of replication in psi research is discussed.

Remote viewing, an experimental procedure for describing geographical locations without aid of the senses, is both an important and controversial area of research. Since the first published report (Puthoff & Targ, 1974), the scientific community has debated the robustness of the phenomenon while investigators in various laboratories have worked to improve the methodology, strengthen the statistical techniques, and conduct successful replication studies. Still the controversy continues.

According to a recent review (Hansen, Schlitz, & Tart, 1984), 28 formal remote-viewing studies have been published, with over half reporting statistical significance at the .05 level (where only one in 20 would be expected by chance). The review also located 18 unpublished studies, 8 reporting statistical success. This suggests that the replication rate is not due to reporting bias (large numbers of unsuccessful experiments going unreported). Conditions for these studies have been diverse, but one thing remains the same: rich qualitative and quantitative materials have been generated under conditions of sensory shielding, thus providing strong evidence for the psi hypothesis.

A version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Parapsychological Association, Syracuse, NY, 1981.

We wish to thank Janet Lange and Christi Haight for assisting as judges, W. Braud and G. Heseltine for their useful comments, and D. Pope and K. R. Rao for their patience and gentle prodding. A very special thanks to D. Weiner for her invaluable contribution of time and energy.

Replication is a cornerstone in scientific methodology (i.e., the methodology developed within the domains of physics and chemistry). It stands as one of the major goals in experimental parapsychology. Several researchers have gone so far as to say that the repeatable experiment is the most important challenge facing parapsychology today. Although we agree that better control over the psi elicitation process is a worthy goal, we also hold that the replication issue is quite different for behavioral sciences as compared with physics or chemistry. Even though an exact replication is realistically impossible for any science (Polanyi, 1958; Travis, 1981), it is especially problematic in studies that deal with transitory states of consciousness such as mood, motivation, and expectation. As viewed from the concrete existential point of view, "There is not 'invariant objectivity' possible in any situation. As people live, they grow and change. There is no repeat possible, even though on the manifest level of individuals there may be much habitual stereotypy" (von Eckartsberg, 1969, p. 287).

Within experimental methodology, there exist various types of replication. Each has its own role in providing relevant information. The type one chooses stems largely from the background of scientific accomplishment and not from a priori logical considerations (Sidman, 1960). Because of the controversy surrounding the remote-viewing work, and the emphasis on replication in parapsychology, we conducted the following experiment. It is a direct, intrasubject replication, based on the design established by Schlitz and Gruber (1980).¹ In the 1980 study, done with the hope of gaining firsthand insights into the remote-viewing process, the percipient (M. S.) remained in Detroit, Michigan, while the agent (E. R. G.) visited randomly selected target sites in Rome, Italy. The results of that experiment provided highly significant evidence in favor of the remote-viewing hypothesis.

METHOD

The study was carried out during the spring of 1980. M. J. S. again acted as percipient. She remained in Durham, North Carolina, while J. M. H., acting as agent, visited target sites in Cocoa Beach, Florida. After the completion of 10 experimental trials, the materials were evaluated by two judges, who compared the percipient's descriptions with the actual target sites.

¹Although this design is considered a direct replication, it involved both a new agent and a different set of geographical locations for both agent and percipient. The design, however, was the same.

Target Pool and Target Selection

The agent together with a colleague in Florida, D. H. Weiner, selected possible target sites in the Cocoa Beach area. The pool was constructed to contain distinctive sites, with several sites of a given type included (i.e., churches, banks, restaurants, parks, and so forth)—sites that were both unique and rich with personal meaning for the agent.

Targets were selected from the pool by the use of a random-number table. An entry point was generated on an REG (random-events generator) by an assistant at the Institute for Parapsychology in Durham. On each experimental day, the agent would select the target site based on the next appropriate number in the random-number table. The targets were listed on a sheet of paper, each site numbered for identification. The target pool was sampled without replacement, thus preventing any target from being chosen more than once. The 10 sites finally selected were as follows: the H. Humpback bridge, Alma's Restaurant, Port Canaveral, a Methodist church, a post office, the Canaveral Pier, a missile display at Patrick Air Force Base, a children's playground, a fruit shop, and a glass bank.

The Agent

After determining the randomly selected target location for the day, the agent traveled there, remaining from 11:00 to 11:15 A.M. At the site, she was free to walk around or sit, while observing the surroundings. She attempted to involve herself in the site, swinging at the playground, eating at the restaurant, and so on. She took photographs of the site for use as feedback to the percipient after completion of the study. (These photographs were not used for judging purposes.)

After completing all 10 trials, the agent sent the final target order to a colleague, J. Munson, for safekeeping and an unordered list of the targets to D. H. W. for preparation of the judging.

The Percipient

At 11:00 A.M. on each of 10 experimental days, the percipient sat in a dimly lighted room and attempted to describe her impressions of the agent's location. She was completely blind to the contents of the target pool or the target site for any specific day, although she did know that the sites were in the Cocoa Beach area, a place she had

never previously visited. She would gently ask herself, "Where is JoMarie?" She would then record her impressions on cassette tape and make brief sketches. She described raw impressions, avoiding any attempts to become overly analytical.

After each session, the taped impressions were given to an associate, S. T. Maginn, for typing. This associate was also blind to the contents of the target pool or target site on any specific day.

Following completion of the 10 trials, the percipient gave copies of the transcripts to two colleagues, J. Davis for safekeeping and D. H. W. for preparation of the judging.

Feedback

No trial-by-trial feedback was given to the participants in this study, and, in fact, no feedback was available for several weeks following the experiment. Photographs of the sites, taken by the agent, were provided to the percipient only after completion of the study.

Any contact between the percipient and the agent was conducted via D. H. W.; there was no form of sensory communication between the two experimenters throughout the entire experimental series.

Judging

After receiving the percipient's transcripts and the agent's unordered target list, D. H. W. prepared the materials for blind judging. First, she checked the transcripts for phrases that might imply a temporal order; however, none were found. She then sent the following items to two judges in the Cocoa Beach area: copies of the 10 transcripts in random order; copies of the 10 geographical locations, also in random order; rating and ranking sheets; and brief instructions about the judging procedure (see Appendix).

Ratings. Judges were provided with 10 rating sheets, one for each target site, which was listed at the top of the sheet. Each of these sheets had 10 lines representing scales from 1 to 100. The judges were asked to visit the site mentioned at the top of the sheet and, after looking around for 10 to 15 minutes, to read each transcript and rate each one according to how well they thought it resembled the location. They were instructed to indicate their opinion by drawing a perpendicular line along the continuum from 0 to 100% correspondence, doing this for each transcript. They were informed that the order of the target sites was arbitrary, so they could visit them in any order they chose.

Rankings. The judges were asked to rank each site against all transcripts after they had visited all the sites. A rank of "1" would denote a high degree of correspondence; and a rank of "10," little correspondence. Following this, they were instructed to send their responses to D. H. W. at the Institute.

In conducting the blind judging, the two judges worked together to make their decisions. Thus, only one set of judgments was sent to D. H. W.

RESULTS

After receiving the judges' responses, D. H. W. made copies of the materials. One was held for safekeeping, and the other was given to M. J. S. for statistical evaluation.

In preparing the material for analysis, M. J. S. first measured the lines for ratings in centimeters. These measurements were then double-checked by two independent assistants who were blind to the correct target order. Following this, she arranged the scores into two 10×10 matrices, one for ratings and one for rankings. These matrices were again double-checked for accuracy. A separate computer file was input for each matrix and was double-checked.

The prestated method of analysis for this "closed deck" series was the direct-count-of-permutations (see Burdick & Kelly, 1977; Schlitz & Gruber, 1980; Scott, 1972). This statistical program, written by J. Kennedy, computed an exact p by scoring and counting all possible permutations of targets along the diagonal while keeping the response matrix fixed. The permutations method yielded a p of .048 (one-tailed) for rankings and a p of .025 (one-tailed) for ratings (see Table 1).

DISCUSSION

The results of this study represent a successful confirmation of long-distance remote viewing. As stated by Sidman (1960), the value of an intrasubject replication is that it "provides a unique demonstration of a technique's reliability. When an organism's behavior can repeatedly be manipulated in a quantitatively consistent fashion, the phenomenon in question is a real one and the experimenter has relevant variables under control" (p. 85).

The experiment was conducted under rigorous conditions, utilizing a three-experimenter design. In addition, outside assistants provided an extra level of security. Any contact between percipient and agent was conducted via D. H. W.; there was no sensory

TABLE 1
COMBINED JUDGES' RANKINGS AND RATINGS OF PROTOCOLS

Sites	Transcripts									
	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10
	<i>Rankings</i>									
S1	(3)	2	7	8	1	10	9	4	6	5
S2	2	(1)	5	4	9	7	10	3	6	8
S3	8	1	(10)	3	6	7	5	2	9	4
S4	2	7	1	(8)	9	4	6	10	3	5
S5	6	7	10	2	(4)	8	5	1	9	3
S6	3	6	5	10	8	(1)	9	2	4	7
S7	8	6	9	2	3	7	(4)	5	10	1
S8	5	10	2	8	3	9	1	(6)	4	7
S9	3	10	5	9	6	2	7	4	(1)	8
S10	9	8	7	3	5	6	4	2	10	(1)
	$p = .048$									
	<i>Ratings</i>									
S1	(3)	65	17	2	72	2	43	32	20	35
S2	2	(90)	36	31	2	2	58	40	19	1
S3	17	110	(3)	15	1	1	1	28	1	13
S4	3	1	105	(2)	1	5	13	1	8	3
S5	9	2	2	25	(12)	3	8	105	1	12
S6	2	1	3	2	2	(69)	1	0	0	1
S7	18	10	2	48	31	2	(3)	19	1	64
S8	63	0	56	2	15	3	12	(2)	10	1
S9	4	1	1	2	0	43	7	13	(107)	2
S10	1	2	0	2	2	2	0	54	0	(96)
	$p = .025$									

communication between percipient and agent until completion of the experiment. Target sites were randomly selected from a larger pool, and although a closed-deck procedure was used, the lack of trial-by-trial feedback prevented any problems with subject-protocol dependency (Marks & Kammann, 1978). Any statistical assumptions concerning judging independence (judgments for one target site influencing the judgment for another target site; see Kennedy, 1979)

were avoided by use of the permutations method of analysis (Burdick & Kelly, 1977).

The present experiment provides a successful experimental replication, but the magnitude of the statistical effect, as measured by the p value, is less than that of the original Schlitz and Gruber series (1980). This brings to light the difficulty of exact replication within the behavioral sciences. To illustrate the point, we may draw an analogy by focusing on the artistic process. In the act of creating, the artist makes an original statement. There is a certain energy and excitement that propels this process, a unique state of consciousness. Later, the artist may recreate the painting . . . thus replicating. But the replication is not the creative act, and the experience of the artist has changed. The product of his work is different, although the difference may be difficult to perceive.

Such is the case for a remote viewer. Although the procedure is a given, just as the paints and canvas are for the artist, the process is always different. In each trial, the percipient brings a new set of experiences to the experimental setting. The ritual (Schlitz, 1982) or recipe (Targ & Puthoff, 1977) can be closely followed, thus helping to recreate the original experience. However, the experiences and attitudes of the percipient will always influence the way in which the ritual is integrated into consciousness. A true replication is impossible.

It is obvious that empirical science, with its emphasis on replication, is important and useful. Among other things, it provides us with a method (though limited) for distinguishing the genuine from the spurious. Nevertheless, replication is not the only criterion for determining reality (see Rao, 1981), and it must not be the ultimate basis for establishing the scope of scientific inquiry (Schlitz, in press). If it were the ultimate basis, one could not investigate, for example, the creative process of the artist we mentioned. Clearly, we must reach further in our study of man.

The usefulness of methodologies for natural science notwithstanding, parapsychologists have much to gain from the adoption of a phenomenological attitude toward the study of psi (and consciousness in general) (Kelly & Locke, 1981; Locke & Schlitz, 1983; Schlitz, in press). Taking such a perspective, our attention shifts from quantitative validation to qualitative investigation. Phenomenology, by providing a method for our inquiry, may help to map the levels of consciousness that make up the psi elicitation process. "Phenomenology deals with human beings on a one-to-one basis. The subject is not thought of as a static personality structure but as a spontaneous interacting individual who influences others and is, in turn, influ-

enced by them" (Severin, 1973, p. 293). Even though we cannot experience the excitement, fear, or pain of another, we can search for our own experiences that correspond with those that he or she expresses.

In undertaking a phenomenological perspective, we are interested in a complex approach to human experience and consciousness that emphasizes perception—but in a specific manner. A central component of phenomenological investigation is the suspension of assumptions toward the object of investigation. An absolute cancelling of assumptions is futile in any act of perception, but in phenomenology one attempts to identify preconceived ideas, converting them into data and resources pertinent to the investigation. For example, in the remote-viewing situation, the interest is not primarily the percipient's impressions, which may or may not match the actual target site. Rather, it is the method by which the impressions are developed and reported. Phenomenology offers a kind of uncovering process by providing guideposts to what is primary and what is subsidiary in the act of perception. In our effort to more completely understand how the remote-viewing perception is constructed (built up) and reported, we are concerned with what Locke and Schlitz (1983) identified as:

1. Culture-specific categories and language habits (descriptive protocols) of the viewer.
2. Context-specific categories and language habits which are contained within the remote viewing situation.
3. The composition of the viewer's natural attitude (i.e., the everyday fact world which is taken as a given by any individual) which is the basic matrix within which perception and action (including language acts) occur.
4. The idiosyncratic organization of experience which reflects the biography of the remote viewing percipient and their situation adaptation, and the way in which these intersect with the previous points and the situation being investigated (p. 239).

Although the present experiment did not formally include a phenomenological inventory, a brief example of the benefits of such an approach can be supplied. At the beginning of each experimental session, the percipient reported her initial experience as visual images appearing in different degrees of clarity, intensity, and recognizability. On closer analysis, however, she experienced other response modalities (kinesthetic and emotive responses) but they received less emphasis in her report (perhaps because of the implicit bias inherent in the remote-"viewing" protocol). She would sit quietly, waiting as it were, for images to come to mind. Often she would experience sensations or impressions that occurred so quickly that she was unable to "capture"

them. When this occurred, she reported a type of anticipation, even anxiety. She had the greatest amount of confidence for the sessions in which she felt that she had made contact with the site—actually “feeling” herself in the surroundings. During these sessions, images and feelings were strong and provided a total, rather than partial, experience of the site.

Throughout the various remote-viewing trials, the percipient reported a certain censoring of information. Specific images, referred to in her experimental notes as “burn in” impressions, occurred many times when she closed her eyes. These commonly experienced impressions were rarely described in the context of the experimental manipulation, although they are clearly important for a more complete understanding of the remote-viewing experience.

The foregoing discussion is not meant to be conclusive. Rather, it simply provides the reader with a phenomenological flavor. As more people begin to consider the phenomenological aspects of the experience, we may begin to understand more clearly where psi fits within the realm of consciousness research. More data are needed before any solid attempts at generalizations can be made. Also, as more experimenters become subjects, and more subjects experimenters, we may begin to understand, firsthand, more about the psi process. As a Mexican curandero so clearly pointed out for an American investigator:

Many of these things you must experience, before you understand them. When you have experienced and understood them, you either will not need to ask questions, or your questions will be the kind that I can answer. (Trotter & Chavira, 1981, p. 11)

In adopting a phenomenological attitude, we may better begin to see the role of psi (and consciousness) in a more complete science of man—where replication is a part but not a whole. While scientific rigor is vital to the future of psi research, we must not ignore the subjective aspects of the psi elicitation process.

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APPENDIX
JUDGING INSTRUCTIONS

Here are the transcripts for the ESP experiment JoMarie told you about. To refresh your memory, Jo went to one of 10 spots in or around Cocoa Beach at a specific time on each of 10 days. Marilyn Schlitz, here in Durham, tried to pick up ESP impressions about Jo's location. Your role as a judge is to evaluate the correspondence between transcripts of Marilyn's impressions and the actual locations. If long-distance ESP has occurred, then Marilyn's impressions on a particular day should more closely match the place where Jo actually was that day (that day's "target site") than they do the other 9 target sites.

Enclosed are 10 transcripts (one for each day of the experiment) and any drawings Marilyn might have made to accompany her verbal statements. These transcripts have been randomly numbered for identification purposes. You will also find 10 rating sheets with a different target site listed at the top of each sheet, and 10 lines making a scale from 1 to 100. (I'll explain the 11th sheet in a minute.) What you will do is go to the site mentioned at the top and, after looking around for 10 to 15 minutes, read *each* transcript and rate *each* one according to how well you think it resembles the location. Indicate your opinion by drawing a perpendicular line along the continuum from 0% to 100% correspondence. Do this for each transcript at each site. (The order of the target sites is arbitrary, so you can visit them in any order you wish.)

Since you probably aren't familiar with this type of procedure, let me give you a few suggestions. First of all, the correspondences are likely to be subtle things—similar shapes or impressions based on mental associations to the sites—rather than a literal description, so your judgments may require some thought. Since Jo spent about 15 minutes at the location, it would be good if you could do the same before you begin judging. This way, things that you might not notice immediately, but that Jo noticed, will be seen. In a previous experiment of this type, the successful judge (the one that caught the correct correspondences) had spent a half hour at each site and went back to them for a final check. You may not have the time to do that, but the more time you can spend with this, the more likely it is that the study will be successful.

OK. After you've visited all sites you will fill out the remaining sheet (the ranking sheet). Here, you will consider each transcript individually and rank each site against it for correspondence. A rank of "1" means a high degree of correspondence, and a rank of "10" means little correspondence. So, for example, if you thought that transcript #1 best described the missiles, you would write "6" in the first space on the first line, since the missiles were target #6 (or you could write *missiles* in the space). You will compare all the sites against all the transcripts in this way.

When you are through, send me the 10 rating sheets and the ranking sheet in the enclosed envelope. (You can keep the transcripts.) When the study is over I'll let you know how it turned out.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me collect. Thank you very much for doing this for us.

Sincerely,
Debra H. Weiner