

TRANSCONTINENTAL REMOTE VIEWING: A REJUDGING

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ABSTRACT: In an earlier report on remote viewing, it was noted by the authors that in spite of the rigorous methods employed, a potential weakness existed in the study. This involved inclusion of the agent's impressions of the target sites in the material given to the judges. In order to insure the validity of the earlier findings, a rejudging was undertaken to eliminate this potential for sensory cuing. The results of the rejudging were statistically significant. A comparison of the two sets of judgments yielded no significant difference. This rejudging confirms the robustness of the earlier finding.

INTRODUCTION

Since the early days of psychical research, methods for the scientific study of psi have evolved by leaps and bounds. In the process of performing the seemingly "impossible," parapsychologists have had to insure rigid controls within a laboratory setting. As pointed out by Rhine, Pratt, Stuart, Smith and Greenwood (1940):

Because of the strong opposition which the ESP hypothesis meets from modern psychologists, uncommonly high standards of evidence are required. However, so long as these additional demands are not inconsistent with the statement of the problem and do not exact conditions that would interfere with the hypothetical process under test, they serve the purpose of making the conclusions more secure. (p. 19)

In an earlier publication entitled "Transcontinental Remote Viewing" (Schlitz & Gruber, 1980), it was noted by the authors that, despite rigorous methods employed by the experimenters, a potential weakness existed in the study. This involved inclusion of the agent's impressions of the target sites which were generated during the experimental period, and which were given to the judges along with directions to each site. It was possible that some subtle sensory cuing resulting from these impressions may have been responsible for the statistically significant results. As pointed out in the earlier work (Schlitz & Gruber, 1980), the argument goes as follows:

Special thanks go to J. E. Kennedy for his help with the statistical evaluations in this paper.

A certain amount of shared experience can be expected between two persons with similar interests. This would therefore allow for a potential non-psi factor to contribute to the results. Such a criticism might be especially applicable if reference to weather or news events were included. However, given the great distances in the present study and the fact that neither experimenter was noting weather or news events in the distant location, the number of contributory factors would seem to have been greatly reduced. (p. 313)

It was for this reason then that a rejudging of the transcontinental remote viewing project was undertaken, this time without inclusion of the agent's impressions.

PROCEDURE

The procedure followed in the rejudging of the "Transcontinental Remote Viewing" study departed from the initial protocol in three main ways: exclusion of the agent E_2 's impressions of the target sites; the use of two judges instead of five; and changes in the appearance of several of the target sites, when the new judges witnessed them, as a result of a year's duration between the first judging and the second.

JUDGING PROCEDURE

The judges, two students enrolled in a philosophy of science course at the University of Rome, were given copies of those materials presented to the initial set of judges. These included: photocopies of the subject E_1 's impressions of the distant target sites, a list of the 10 geographical target sites as well as directions to the sites, a response sheet on which the judges were to record their judgments, and, finally, some brief instructions.

As in the initial series, the judges were asked to rank each transcript to each target site on a scale of 1 to 10, a 1 being given to the closest match, 2 to the next, and so on. In addition, judges rated the degree of correspondence between the actual site and the subject's impressions of the site by making a slash along a line, with one end designating zero correspondence and the other end representing total correspondence. Following completion of this task, they were asked to return the materials to their instructor, who then mailed these judgments to E_2 in Freiburg, Germany. After receiving the judges' responses, E_2 sent the materials to E_1 at the FRNM for statistical evaluation.

QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT

After receiving the judges' responses, E_1 followed the same procedure as used in the initial evaluation. To do so, she arranged the scores in two 10×10 matrices, one for ratings and one for rankings. Both judges' responses were added together to represent one score in the matrix. The direct count-of-permutations method was then used, this statistic computing an exact p by scoring and counting all possible permutations of targets while keeping the response matrix fixed. The permutations method yielded a p of .0016 for both the ranking and rating. Thus the reanalysis verifies the presence of psi in the experiment although the result is less significant than the probability of 10^{-6} in the first judging.

Given the magnitude of the difference between the overall probabilities, the question arises: Are the results of the two judgments significantly different from each other? To address this question, we employed the randomization test (Siegal, 1956, p. 152), using as data items the probability values from the permutation analysis of the matrix of rankings for each of the judges (*i.e.*, values of 9.4×10^{-6} ; 1.2×10^{-4} ; 5.4×10^{-7} ; .22; and 1.7×10^{-3} for the first group, and 1.3×10^{-3} and 1.7×10^{-2} for the second). Given the presence of ESP in the data, this test evaluates whether the two sets of judgments follow different distributions. Similarly, the test evaluates whether the differences between groups is greater than would be expected given the variability within groups. The result of the randomization test did not reach even a suggestive level of significance $p > .1$. The same was true of a Mann-Whitney U test (which is a randomization test applied to the ranks of the data items rather than to the raw data).

It should be noted that the rejudging was intended to evaluate the presence of ESP and was not designed with the comparison between judgments in mind. As a result, the comparison is both post hoc and of very low power—the most significant result possible with groups of five and two is 1 in 21. Further, if a significant difference had been found, it would have been uninterpretable. Factors that could have contributed to a less significant result in the second judging include: (1) sensory cues in the first judging, (2) the loss of information due to changes in the target sites, (3) the fact that, assuming the same level of ESP information, the pooled results of five judges might be expected to be more significant than that of two judges, due to the larger amount of redundancy, and (4) as discussed below, additional ESP information contributed by the presence of the agent's impressions.

DISCUSSION

Given the results of the present exercise, we conclude that the results of "Transcontinental Remote Viewing" are due to psi and not to some subtle sensory cuing in the data.

What seems of relevance here is a discussion of the weakness in the general design of restrictive ESP experiments, be they remote viewing or other forms of psi testing. As was mentioned in the earlier work (Schlitz & Gruber, 1980), elimination of the agent's impressions from information received by the judges narrows the role of telepathy in the experimental design. It seems quite likely that telepathic impressions, not only of the target site, but also of inner states, might play an important role in psi experiments. It appears also that our experimental procedures do not allow for things that are "natural" to the dreamlike structure of ESP. For example, consider a session in the Maimonides dream series (see Bender, 1971, pp. 44-45), where Ullman was acting as the agent but was faced with difficulty when concentrating on the target. He noted in his protocol that he had a severe stomach ache and was having difficulty focusing. He also noted that he thought he would have to undergo a stomach operation and that he would need a blood transfusion. At the same time, the percipient dreamed that she was in a clinic. The doctor in this dream told her that she was being prepared for stomach surgery and that she would need a blood transfusion. Of course the judges would not note any correspondence between the subjects' dream and the target picture if they were not informed of the additional impressions of the agent.

Granted, this material might cause methodological problems for the experiment *per se*; but on the other hand, it yields much more information about the structure of ESP than does the more restrictive free-response methodology. What is needed is a procedure which allows for the dreamlike quality of psi, or other qualities which are as yet unnoted, while maintaining a strong basis of scientific rigor.

Just how one does this is not quite clear. A phenomenological approach may help to shed light on the contextual features of the psi-elicitation process although this still does not address our problem of sensory cuing. Douglas Stokes¹ has suggested a possible compromise between inclusion of the agent's impressions and the need for total security in the experimental procedure. Here he suggests that multiple agents could be sent to each of five different sites in a target pool. After the agents record their impressions and the percipient has

¹ Private correspondence, 1981.

recorded his/her impressions, the target could be determined by a random number generator. Although this is a worthy suggestion, it is somewhat troublesome on two counts: first, it is a precognitive approach to remote viewing, not allowing for real-time design; and second, it still seems to include the potential possibility—although less so—of sensory cuing due to the increased randomness when selecting out which of the agents' impressions would be included in the judging process.

Further thought must certainly be given to the problem. An easy answer may not be forthcoming. In fact, it may be that current scientific methods may be inadequate for our insight into the nature of psi (see Gruber, 1980, 1981). Whatever resolution comes of the problem, we must be very clear that we are not, as White (1980) put it, "throwing the baby out with the bath water."

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