

NOTE ON A REANALYSIS OF THE UCSB REMOTE-VIEWING EXPERIMENTS

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ABSTRACT: This paper presents a reanalysis of a portion of the remote-viewing experiments carried out at the University of California at Santa Barbara in 1975. The UCSB experiments differed in several ways from the SRI protocol, and one of us (R. T.) hypothesized that the nonsignificance of the UCSB series came in part from these departures. We therefore arranged for rejudging of the initial 6 trials of the 12-trial series that conformed most closely to the preferred protocol. Blind judgments of these six trials by three independent judges, one from SRI and two from UCSB, each yielded significant correspondences between the judges' ranking of viewer transcripts and the target locations for which they were intended. This suggests that remote viewing occurred in the first trials that most closely followed the SRI protocol.

Since the first publication of remote-viewing experiments dealing with paranormal perception of distant locations (Puthoff & Targ, 1975), many replications have been attempted. Several have been successful; others have not. In this paper we briefly describe two factors that tend toward nonsuccess in remote viewing (and probably in other free-response tasks as well).

At the 1975 Parapsychological Association meeting in Santa Barbara, Morris presented a paper (Allen, Green, Rucker, Cohen, Goolsby, & Morris, 1976) describing a recently concluded remote-viewing series of 12 trials with students at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The series was independently evaluated by three judges, all of whom found the series to be nonsignificant, as measured by their inability to blind-match viewer transcripts to target sites. It was noted that there was an insignificant decline from the first six to the last six sessions. The SRI team was surprised by these results because the viewers from UCSB had spent a day at SRI, were enthusiastic about the proposed experiments, and one of the students had even carried out what we all considered to be a successful remote-viewing trial while at SRI. Since Morris is known to be a successful, careful, and

psi-conductive experimenter, the experiments were thought likely to succeed.

However, in the course of Morris's description of the actual experimental protocol, two factors emerged which made the SRI researchers feel that they understood why the UCSB experiment failed to show significance.

The first factor by which the experiment seemed to differ from the preferred protocol was the rate and stress of carrying out the experimental trials. The first six trials were carried out in a much more leisurely manner than the last six, which "had a more hurried aspect to them" (Allen et al., 1976); i.e., they were carried out in the week before final exams! We believe that this is probably not a relaxed or psi-conductive time in the lives of university students.

The second aspect of the experiment about which we had some concern was the judging task, which consisted of a 12-by-12 matrix of targets and transcripts for a judge to associate with each other. Since psychologists generally agree that a person can seldom adequately focus his attention on more than 7 items at a given time¹, we believed that 12 trials were too many for any judge to deal with adequately, even with good psychic functioning on the part of the viewers.

On the basis of these ideas and the noted decline from first six to last six sessions, R. T. decided to return to Santa Barbara at a later time and rejudge (i.e., via blind matching) the first six trials in the series. During the convention, R. T. had heard no discussion of the specifics of any of the targets or protocols used in the study. As nearly as he or any of the rest of us could recall, such specifics had not been part of the convention paper. Thus we decided that R. T. still qualified as a blind judge for those targets.

We did this in the fall of 1975. The transcripts were read by R. T. for the first time at UCSB and were broken down into concepts in the morning. Then, in the afternoon, each of the six target sites was visited by R. T. with an escort who had never read the transcripts. The next day, back in Menlo Park, the transcripts were ranked by R. T. from 1 to 6, best to worst match, against each of the target sites just visited. This matching matrix was then returned to Morris at UCSB for decoding and evaluation. It resulted in four first-place matches, one second-, and one third-place match. The probability of this outcome was then calculated exactly, using Scott's (1972) method. In this procedure one determines, with a computer, the number of

¹ Personal communication from Charles Tart.

possible permutations of the basic matrix that could give this result (numerical sum of ratings on the diagonal) or lower by rearrangement of the matrix columns. Given the diagonal sum from the judging, there are only three other arrangements that give an equal or lower sum of diagonal elements; and in accordance with Scott's exact method of calculation, the probability of achieving this result or better by chance is 4 out of the $6!$ possible arrangements, or $p = .0056$ (one-tailed).

The authors of this paper found this to be a very encouraging result. To test the reliability of this judging, two new judges at UCSB, selected for their enthusiasm for psi but not familiar with this study, were also asked to judge the first six trials. These judges were students in a new class and had not been involved with the parapsychology program at UCSB at the time of the original study or its convention presentation. Thus they too seemed qualified as blind judges.

Both of these judges independently matched four of the six transcripts to the correct targets, and each matched correctly the same four as R. T. Matching four out of six is a significant result ($p < .02$) when it is evaluated by binomial expansion and the probability is doubled to make the analysis two-tailed.

With regard to the judging, it may be as important to provide a manageable task for the judges as it is to attend to the abilities of the percipient in a psi experiment. As one increases the number of items in the judging task from 6 to 12, one doubles the number of tries that a judge has for making a first-place match, while cutting in half his a priori likelihood of doing so. Therefore, on purely statistical grounds there is no difference between matching 12 and 6. However, from the judge's point of view the additional mental gymnastics required can be expected to reduce his ability to reach meaningful subjective judgments.

It should be noted, of course, that both researchers were aware that in the initial results the strongest correspondences were in the first six trials. The follow-up judging has basically confirmed that there was positive scoring for the first six trials. It does not address the problem of why the uneven dispersal is there; it merely confirms that results were good on those trials that most resembled the standard SRI procedure. To evaluate whether or not the reduced complexity of the judging task was in part responsible, we should also have had the last six trials independently judged. Perhaps in future research, the size of the judging pool could be systematically varied.

We would suggest from this post hoc analysis that although the UCSB 12-site experiment taken as a whole was statistically non-

significant, as originally judged, the failure to replicate can perhaps be attributed to judging and other procedural matters rather than to fundamental problems associated with remote viewing itself. Such factors should be kept in mind by future researchers.

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