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RESOLUTION IN REMOTE VIEWING STUDIES: MINI-TARGETS

ABSTRACT

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To obtain an estimate of the resolution capability of the remote-viewing process, an experimental series was carried out in which a subject was asked to render descriptions of objects hidden in small light-tight metal containers (35 mm film cans).

In preparation for the series, a target selector, not known to the subject and not otherwise associated with this study, was asked to select ten small objects and to place each in a separate 35 mm light-tight film can. The target pool was constructed to contain objects not particularly distinct from one another, so as to circumvent subject strategies based on knowledge of previous targets (by feedback) as the series progressed. The film cans were then turned over to a second experimenter who, without opening them, numbered them 1 to 10 and secured them in a safe. At this point all information as to film can contents and target can number was lost.

At the beginning of each trial the subject was closeted with an experimenter in an isolated windowless room. A second experimenter then left the laboratory, generated a random number by the use of the random-number function on a hand calculator, obtained the associated can from the target pool in the safe, and took it to a convenient location (not told to the subject) in a park nearby SRI (about 1/8th mile distant). The target can was thus not seen by the subject before or during the experiment; the location of the target film can was known to the subject only as being on the person of an experimenter, known to her, outbound to an unknown site. The outbound experimenter then remained at the remote location for a ten-minute target period, with the film can still unopened so that he remained ignorant of the target.

During the target period the subject was asked to locate the outbound experimenter and to describe the contents of the film can in his possession. Since the investigator with the subject was ignorant of both the particular target and the contents of the target pool, he was free to question the subject about her perceptions without fear of cueing. The entire interaction in the laboratory was tape recorded, and the subject was encouraged to make drawings to accompany her verbal description of the film-can contents.

Following the target period, the outbound experimenter returned to the laboratory, at which time all concerned (subject and experimenters) learned for the first time the contents of the target film can by opening it.

A sequence of ten trials was carried out. During the series the target cans were used without replacement until the ten possibilities were exhausted.

To facilitate analysis, it was decided in advance of the experimental series that the ten trials would be broken down into two subgroups of five trials each. Thus, in the blind rank-order procedure used (described below), a judge was asked to compare each target against five transcripts--one generated during the target period of interest and four generated during the other target periods of the subgroup.

In preparation for the judging of each subgroup, the subject's tapes were transcribed. The resulting transcripts were then edited only to the extent of deleting information which might act as artifactual cues to a judge, such as refernces to other targets, or phrases which might indicate the temporal order of the transcripts.

The transcripts and film can targets, each in their own random order different from the order of target usage, were then turned over to an independent judge not otherwise associated with the experimental series. The judge was instructed to blind rank order, on a scale 1-5 (best to worst match), each of the five transcripts against each of the five film can targets in each subgroup, generating 5×5 matrices. In the two series of five each, four were directly matched in the first series, two in the second.

Since the rank orderings by a single judge are not independent, the resulting matrices were analyzed using Scott's exact calculation method involving a direct count of permutations (C. Scott, JSPR 46, pp. 79-90, 1972). For the two matrices, respectively, we obtained by direct count $p_1 = 2/5! = 0.017$, $p_2 = 35/5! = 0.292$, one tailed. Combining the results of the 2 subgroups using the conservative method devised by Eddington (R. Rosenthal, Psych. Bull. 85, pp. 185-193, 1978), we obtain an overall probability of $p = (\Sigma p)^N/N! = (p_1 + p_2)^2/2 = 0.047$, one tailed. Thus the experimental series as a whole reached significance, with the bulk of the significance being generated by the first subgroup which was independently significant.

As examples of the quality of descriptions obtained, the results generated in the first subgroup of five contain quotes from the subject's first paragraph of each description as follows: For a spool and a pin, "It's definitely something thin and long ... with like a nail head at the end;" for a curled up leaf: "a nautilus shape with a tail;" for a leather belt keyring: "The strongest image I get is like a belt;" for a can of sand: "like a miniature tower ... light beige;" for a grey and white quill: "grey and black and white ... it's organic and has been alive ... pointed or slightly rounded off at the top ... open or pointed at the bottom."

We thus obtained evidence that small objects can be discriminated by psi processes, and that the channel functions down to at least the order of a few millimeters spatial resolution. Furthermore, given that all experimenters, including the outbound experimenter with the target, were blind as to both the particular target and the contents of the target pool, we are led to conclude that either (1) the successful use of light-tight film cans indicates that the light level required to illuminate the target can be vanishingly small, or (2) the primary information channel is precognition of the feedback. Further work will be required to differentiate between the two.