

Menlo Park, CA--The ability to view remote geographical locations by means of an unknown perceptual channel may be widespread in the general population, according to two Stanford Research Institute (SRI) researchers.

In an article appearing in the March issue of the prestigious Proceedings of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE), SRI physicists Dr. Harold E. Puthoff and Russell Targ report that a wide variety of subjects--including visiting government scientists and other persons without previous experience in paranormal functioning--have demonstrated the ability to describe correctly, often in great detail, geographical or technical material such as buildings, roads and laboratory apparatus at remote locations unknown to them.

More than 50 experiments have been conducted under controlled laboratory conditions over a three-year period at SRI, using both experienced and inexperienced subjects.

The principal difference between the two types of subjects was not that the inexperienced ones never exhibited the faculty of remote viewing, the article says, but rather that their results were less reliable than those of their more experienced counterparts.

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Remote perceptions sometimes include sounds as well as sights. For example, one subject described a squeaky triangular black swing in a playground as a "black iron triangle bigger than a man," and reported hearing a "squeak, squeak about once a second."

The ability of subjects to accurately describe remote scenes appeared to be independent of distance and electrical shielding. Distances between subject and scene varied from a few meters up to 4000 kilometers (about 2480 miles). Subjects were tested while sitting both inside and outside of a Faraday cage--an electrically screened room that blocks the passage of radio waves over most of the spectrum.

The article states that subjects commonly reported perceiving the object or scene as if they were close to it. It also notes that they could shift their point of view so as to perceive elements that would not be visible to an observer standing at ground level.

For example, one subject described and drew a belt drive on top of a drill press and out of sight of someone operating the machine.

Another subject described items hidden by shrubbery from onlookers at the site.

The researchers carried out an original successful series of experiments followed up with five additional verification series using different subjects. The total number of experiments added up to 51.

A member of SRI management not otherwise connected with the experiments supervised the selection of target locations for each series of experiments,

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keeping each target in an individually sealed envelope in his office safe.

When an experiment was to be performed, one of the sealed envelopes was selected by a random procedure and handed, still sealed, to the experimenter who was to visit the site. The latter then proceeded directly to the site accompanied by a team of observers.

Meanwhile, the other experimenter, who remained ignorant of the site, was closeted with the subject in the laboratory for the entire experimental period, beginning before the outbound experimenter received his travel orders and ending after the travel team had returned to the Institute.

While the team was at the site, the subject focused on the outbound experimenter and his location, describing elements of the scene and making any drawings he wished while the experimenter who was closeted with him tape recorded his comments.

When all the experiments in a given series had been completed, the typed but unedited transcripts of the subjects' tape recordings, together with associated drawings if any, were handed, unlabeled and in random order, to independent judges.

The judges--all members of the SRI professional staff not otherwise connected with the experiments--were asked to match the transcripts to the sites.

Even under a very conservative statistical procedure, the results of five of the six studies were significantly better than would be expected by chance alone. Three of the studies differed from chance expectations by odds of

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1000 to 1 or better, one by odds of half a million to one.

In one study involving only visiting government scientists, the odds were 60 to 1.

Even the single study that was not statistically significant contained individual descriptions and drawings that bore a striking resemblance to objects at the site.

The researchers point out that while the information channel that couples events remote from the viewer is not yet understood, its existence is not inconsistent with modern scientific thought. In fact, they note, modern physics and neurophysiology provide powerful techniques that can be used to study the nature of this channel.

"We therefore consider it important," they state in the article, "to continue data collection and to encourage others to do likewise. Investigations such as those reported here need replication and extension under as wide a variety of rigorously controlled conditions as possible."

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