

Preliminary Group Report for the Psychological Testing of Subjects

From the Parapsychology Study at Stanford Research Institute

During late summer and early fall, six subjects were referred to me for testing for the parapsychology study at Stanford Research Institute. Three of the subjects were designated as sensitive subjects and three of the subjects were designated as controls. It was planned that I would do the testing without knowledge of which subjects were considered sensitive and which subjects were considered controls. However, in the course of my contacts with these subjects, it proved impossible not to know which subjects belonged to which group, since I was to interview each person in depth. Since personal experience with apparently extra-sensory perception is a fairly dramatic event, subjects could not avoid talking about these events and still be honest in an in-depth interview. Consequently, a secondary plan was developed in which I would do the psychological testing and write individual reports for each subject, and Dr. Heenan would read the test blind and see whether he could pick out three test records which seemed more similar to each other than the rest, thereby discriminating between sensitive and non-sensitive subjects. Dr. Heenan has not yet reviewed the test materials and so, since a preliminary report is requested, I am giving my clinical impressions of the group data as pertains to the sensitive and control subjects.

Intellectual Functioning.

All of the subjects in this study displayed distinctly above-average intellectual abilities. Most subjects reached the superior range, and several of the subjects reached the gifted range. As it happened, the control subjects tended to show higher average intellectual functioning scores than did sensitive subjects, although the difference could not be said to be significant, given that there were only three subjects in each group. Two of the subjects from the sensitive group showed highly variable subtest scores within their intelligence test battery. This is, some of the subskills would be extremely high and other subskills would be extremely low. The variable patterns shown are consistent with ambivalent motivation as regards learning tasks and academic situations. I was able to spot no consistent trends as to which subskills tended to be high and which subskills tended to be low. For all six subjects, verbal and performance skills tended to be about evenly balanced, and memory skills were approximately what would be expected, given the intelligence scores attained. The number scores on memory tests as well as the performances of the subjects themselves reflect a slight tendency toward better memory for material which is organized logically or which appears in a meaningful context than for rote memory material. In the control group, this tendency seems less pronounced and in fact one subject showed

a clear preference for rote memory material. The subjects themselves did not feel that any of the intelligence test material tapped skills or propensities on their part which might be linked to their extra-sensory capacities, and since the patterns of strength and weakness within the test profiles varied so widely, I am inclined to accept their judgment with one possible exception. It is possible that sensitive subjects tend to be holistic perceivers rather than analytic perceivers; that is, to perceive in Gestalt rather than compartmentalized elements. Psychological tests which are directly relevant to this difference in perceptual style appear not to be standardized as yet and so it is difficult to follow this lead.

This might indicate the tendency to be holistic rather than analytic.

Personality Functioning.

When looked at from the point of view of psychopathology, the indicators both in projective and in objective testing do not appear to me to show marked trends, either for the six subjects taken together or for the subjects in each group. There does appear to be an interesting similarity in defensive style, particularly when this is taken together with a similarity in interests and vocational aptitude; which can be seen in a large number of the subjects both in sensitive and control groups. To elaborate, all six subjects tended to have high feminine scores on the masculinity-femininity scale of the M.M.P.I. That scale does not measure sexual orientation but rather sex role stereotype. For example, a person who is highly active in expressing his aggression, who is self assertive and who adopts "masculine" interests in, say, sports, mechanics, etc., is likely to get a high masculine score; a person who tends to be fairly passive in expressing aggression, even manipulative, who tends to be interested in the arts, in music, in aesthetic sensitivities, is likely to gain a high feminine score. Both the men and the women in this group of subjects tended to have high feminine scores. The trend is seen again in the vocational aptitude survey, the Strong Vocational Interest Blank, wherein all of the subjects tended to achieve high scores in music, art and writing, but particularly in writing was ~~this~~ consistent. The score on writing aptitude appeared to be above average for the general population in each subject and for several of the subjects it was one of the highest scores obtained. These two trends in the objective personality test data can be compared with another trend found in the projective test data, namely on the Rorschach. Here, the responses of the subjects tended to emphasize animal or human movement and to de-emphasize color. This pattern is common in people who tend to be introspective, to have a rich inner fantasy life, and in fact to prefer that kind of expression of their emotions to interpersonal expression. The capacity to stand back from one's feelings, observe them, analyze them, even savor them, is common among artists and particularly among writers.

Unfortunately, two of the subjects from the sensitive group were highly defensive about test-taking and their defensiveness was most pronounced in the projective personality tests. The result was that

they gave very minimal records, very few responses, and were close-mouthed in talking about their responses. Hence, the pattern to which I refer can be seen more clearly in the control subjects than in the sensitive subjects even though it appears to occur for all six subjects. Currently I am doing an item-by-item analysis of the subject's answers to the masculinity-femininity scale of the M.M.P.I. to see whether the high scores obtained are the product of interest patterns, aggression patterns, or both, and whether the subjects tended to check the same items in order to achieve their high scores or not. Closer content and sequential analysis of the Rorschach records may also be instructive in this regard.

In the course of the testing, the control subjects began to tell me that as they participated in the S.R.I. study, they appeared to be developing more and more sensitivity on the experiments performed and each was not certain that he should be properly classified as a control subject. In talking with Dr. Puthoff, I learned that they did appear to be showing some sensitivity but that their performances were not reliable and so they still could be said to be importantly different from the sensitive subjects. If the sensitive subjects could be induced to be less defensive in test-taking, it is possible that their records would show a pattern which could be distinguished from that of the control subjects. Since that is not the case, we are left with a dilemma. A tendency toward artistic interests, a rich fantasy life and an introversive style of emotional expression may be accidental in all of these six subjects. It may be characteristic of persons who are willing to participate in parapsychological studies. It may be characteristic of persons who have some extrasensory capacity, whether great or small, or it may relate to some other variable which happens to be common to these six subjects. At least four of the subjects in this study describe to me an interest in Scientology and two of them indicate that they have been involved in the Church of Scientology for some time. This commonality may account for the similarity described above.

Should the pattern of emotional style and aesthetic interest prove relevant to extrasensory capacity, it would seem that the Rorschach gets at the most fundamental level of this quality. The objective tests are more likely to be measuring the end products of that fundamental level of emotional expression. Since my reading of projective test material is likely to be colored by my acquaintance with the subjects and what they said about themselves, I will be interested to see whether Dr. Heenan can discern the same pattern, and for my own curiosity I would like to be able to test the sensitive subjects again, without them having read this report, to see whether I can put them more at ease on a second contact and get more productive records from them. Two of these subjects said frankly that they were alienated at the thought of psychological testing because their experience was that people with extrasensory capacity were written off as nuts and that psychologists and psychiatrists always examined them with an eye toward any pathology they could discover. If they could be reassured

that that was not the point of interest and at the same time not be coached as to what kinds of responses I was interested in, another session of projective testing might be productive.

Karen L. Nelson
Karen L. Nelson, Ph.D.
Clinical Psychologist

KLN/rg