

TRANSCONTINENTAL REMOTE VIEWING

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**ABSTRACT:** Two experimenters carried out a long-distance remote-viewing experiment, with one of them, in Detroit, Michigan, acting as percipient and the other, in Rome, Italy, as the agent. From a pool of 40 geographical target locations in Rome, 10 were randomly chosen without replacement, and the agent visited them one at a time for 15 minutes on each of 10 consecutive days. The percipient, at the same time, recorded in words and sketches her impressions of the agent's location. Later, five independent judges received copies of these sketches, and the impressions translated into Italian. They visited the locations and judged the protocols with respect to their correspondence to the target sites. Analysis of the results by a direct-count-of-permutations method yielded a  $p$  of  $4.7 \times 10^{-6}$  for judges' ratings and  $5.8 \times 10^{-6}$  for rankings. The authors point out that free-response remote viewing may be a psi-conducive procedure, but that the results may also have been influenced by exceptionally high motivation on the part of the two experimenters.

INTRODUCTION

Experimental parapsychology basically utilizes two forms of ESP testing: forced-choice, in which the range of target/responses is restricted, and free-response, which allows for a vast scope of target/response possibilities. The forced-choice paradigm has been highly influential in establishing parapsychology within the scientific framework. This is largely due to the ease with which statistical methods are applied to it. The early free-response work by such researchers as Thaw (1892), Sinclair (1930), and Warcollier (1938), however, provided great quantities of rich qualitative materials. Although these early studies are devoid of any true form of statistical assessment, the available protocols are provocative, to say the least.

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Recognizing the usefulness of free response, investigators such as Carington (1940), Stuart (1942), and Marsh (reported in Fisk, 1960) attempted to incorporate quantitative approaches within their designs. Unfortunately, these initiatives were limited by the cumbersome methods of evaluation available at that time. Today we are equipped with simpler, more refined methods of quantitative analysis, which allow us to go further in exploring the potential advantages of free response without sacrificing scientific rigor.

From the authors' point of view, there are a number of possible advantages to the free-response method. One such advantage lies in the richness and complexity of the targets. Participants in free-response studies are able to freely express a wide variety of impressions, feelings, and hunches. As pointed out by Carington (1940), the difference between free response and forced choice becomes more a question of what, rather than which, for a given subject.

In this way, free response has strong ties with reported psi events in daily life. For one, spontaneous manifestations generally do not occur in a forced-choice, decision-making context, but result from a broad range of stimuli. Child and Levi (1979) caution that generalizations to most of everyday life from the classical forced-choice methods, which restrict the possibilities to a task so clear as guessing a card, is somewhat risky. As noted by Haight (1979), a gap has existed between spontaneous cases of psi and those which occur under controlled, quantitatively assessable conditions. The resurgence of interest in free response may well serve to bridge this gap. As stated by Burdick and Kelly (1977):

Many investigators have felt that something vital was lost in the transportation of psi from its natural setting into the forced-choice paradigm and have sought ways of extending quantitative techniques back into situations which more nearly resemble the conditions of spontaneous psi occurrences. (p. 109)

Another feature of the free-response procedures is the great investment of time. Although this can be thought of as a disadvantage, it has several advantages as well. For instance, it requires a great deal of involvement on the part of the experimenters, which possibly serves to enhance the subject's feeling for the importance of individual trials.

Perhaps the most powerful asset of free-response methods lies in the subjective realm of personal evaluation. For many people, a strong qualitative "hit" is more impressive than a successful outcome based totally on statistical probability. There are also dangers in this

approach, of course; for, as noted by Child (1980), one must use caution when jumping to conclusions based on single selected cases:

This error is paralleled in [the] study of spontaneous cases by the danger of concluding merely from very obvious similarity between a person's imagery and a distant event that the coincidence must be an instance of psi. (p. 177)

We are now, however, in a position to explore the best of both worlds, with free response giving us rich qualitative data as well as statistically quantitative evidence for psi.

Although there are several free-response procedures in use today, the present study was designed as an attempted replication of the remote-viewing work developed by Puthoff and Targ (1975). Within this controlled laboratory design, the percipient is asked to describe the whereabouts of an outside experimenter (the agent) whose exact location at the time is unknown to the percipient.

Despite recent acceptance of the term *remote viewing*, it is interesting to note that the implied phenomenon has been discussed in a broad range of literature throughout the years. As pointed out by Targ and Puthoff (1977):

The basic phenomenon appears to cover a range of subjective experience variously referred to in the literature as astral projection (occult); simple clairvoyance, traveling clairvoyance, or out-of-body experience (parapsychological); exteriorization (psychological); or autoscopia (medical). (p. 5)

*Remote viewing* was chosen then as a descriptive term, free of prejudice and occult assumptions. It is often a matter of taste to favor a specific term and henceforth a slightly different concept. This same discussion may be applied to other areas of psi research as well; for example, the distinction between precognition and backward causation.

Conditions for remote viewing have been diverse. Although most studies have involved real-time situations, whereby the design required simultaneous viewing of a target location by the agent and descriptions by the percipient (Puthoff & Targ, 1975; Puthoff et al., 1979; Schlitz & Deacon, 1980), some studies have also explored the possibilities of precognition<sup>1</sup> (Dunne & Bisaha, 1978, 1979) as well as the effects of distance on the remote-viewing process (Puthoff & Targ, 1976).

<sup>1</sup> In any discussion of precognition, alternative explanations such as psychokinetic effects on the random number generator must be considered.

In exploring the remote-viewing design, it was decided to attempt a replication of the long-distance work. Throughout the history of parapsychology, there has been evidence, although usually informal, that distance has no effect on the psi process. As stated by Warcollier (1938):

We sought telepathically to transmit drawings from one room to another, from one quarter of Paris to another, from one city to another, and from one country to another. Distance never seemed to affect the results. (p. 5)

In a different light, Rao (1966) noted:

Several of the spontaneous cases of psi experiences in which the subjects and the ostensible target objects were widely separated by long distances not only suggested the relative independence of psi and distance, but this observation led to the strengthening of the conviction that psi is extraneous. (p. 63)

#### PROCEDURE

In conducting the present experiment, carried out in November 1979, the percipient, E<sub>1</sub> (M. S.), remained in Detroit, Michigan, while the agent, E<sub>2</sub> (E. R. G.), visited the target sites in Rome, Italy. The experimenters acted as percipient and agent in order to provide the opportunity of observing a remote-viewing experience first-hand. It was felt that this might lead to greater insights which could be of some help in the design of future studies of the remote-viewing type.

#### *Target Pool and Target Selection*

E<sub>2</sub>, together with a colleague in Italy, A. M. Turi, selected 40 target sites in Rome. The target pool was carefully constructed to contain several targets of given types (i.e., fountains, churches, parks, etc.). It was furthermore decided to include indoor as well as outdoor targets within the pool. Indoor targets included rooms, churches, sports halls, museum exhibits, and so on.

On each experimental day at 2:00 p.m. central European time (CET) corresponding to 8:00 a.m. eastern standard time (EST), the target for the day was randomly selected from the pool, without replacement, by means of a random number generator. No attempt was made to avoid similar targets within the pool. It was originally decided to perform 12 trials on 12 consecutive days (November 3-14). However, due to external problems on the part of the subject, only 10

protocols were generated and 10 trials completed. The 10 target sites finally chosen were: the view from the roof of St. Peter's cathedral; the Spanish Steps; the interior of an apartment in the Via Vittoria; a room in the Accademia Tiberina; view from a hill outside the Rome International Airport; the ruins of the Caracalla baths; the park of the Villa Borghese; a room filled with paintings in the Vatican museum; and an overlook from the Sports Palace in Rome-Eur.

#### *Outbound Experimenter Behavior*

E<sub>2</sub> arrived at the target location by 5:00 p.m. (CET), 11:00 a.m. Detroit time. At the target site, E<sub>2</sub> was free to walk around or observe the surroundings. He carried a tape recorder with him and recorded thoughts, impressions of the scene, or specific street scenes and situations at the site. This was done for a period of 15 minutes. E<sub>2</sub> visited all target locations alone except the flat in Via Vittoria (November 6).

Following the experimental period, E<sub>2</sub> sent the final target order as well as transcripts of his impressions, to two colleagues, both of whom were blind to the nature of the experiment.

#### *Inbound Experimenter Behavior*

At 11:00 a.m. (EST) on each of 10 consecutive days, E<sub>1</sub> sat in a dimly lit room and attempted to describe the whereabouts of the distant agent. Although she was in a calm state throughout the series, no formal relaxation procedure was utilized. When making a response, M. S. made an effort to think constantly about the target/agent—trying not to allow other thoughts, such as those concerning daily activities, to intrude. The impressions were recorded on paper, with both sketches and thoughts being written out as the protocol for a given trial.

Following completion of the 10 trials, E<sub>1</sub> prepared two protocols of the protocols. One set was sent to E. R. G., who was then in Austria, for judging preparation, and the other to Hans Bender in Germany for safekeeping. No trial-by-trial feedback was given in this study, and, in fact, no feedback was available to the percipient for several months following the series.

#### *Judging Preparation*

After receiving the transcripts from E<sub>1</sub>, E. R. G. and another

person, blind to the correct targets, translated the transcripts into Italian. The translators then checked the transcripts for phrases from which one might infer temporal order of the transcript target sequence (see criticisms by Marks & Kammann, 1978; discussion by Puhoff, Targ, & May, 1979), although no editing was found to be necessary. The lack of trial-by-trial feedback to the percipient and agent also served to control for such a criticism. As E. R. G. was not blind to the correct target sites while aiding in the translation of the transcripts into Italian, the translation was reexamined for accuracy by a professional translator, P. Giovetti, in Modena, Italy. During this time, she was blind to the correct target sites. In the course of her double-checking, several small changes were made, although nothing of major significance.

The Italian transcripts were typed, each on a separate sheet. E<sub>2</sub> then cut out photocopies of the sketches and attached them to the respective transcripts. The translated transcripts, together with the drawings, were finally photocopied and given to a set of judges.

As a follow-up of a previous work (Schlitz & Deacon, 1980), it was decided to use several judges. For this study, each of five judges scored all protocols against all target sites visited during the experimental period. In this way, the free-response procedure adopted a forced-choice judging process where all the target possibilities were known to the judges. In so doing, judges were asked to rank each transcript to each target site on a scale of 1 to 10. In addition, judges rated the degree of correspondence between protocol and site by making a slash along a line, with one end designating zero correspondence and the other end representing total correspondence. Protocols were presented to each judge in random order, this order being different for each judge. This was done to avoid any potential stacking effect. Judges visited the target locations independently and in the order of their choice. For each target site, judges were also provided with the impressions E<sub>2</sub>, the agent, had recorded while visiting the target sites during the control period.

QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT

After receiving the judges' responses, E<sub>1</sub> prepared the ratings and rankings for analysis. To do this, she first measured the lines for ratings and then summed the ratings for all judges for each transcript target. The same procedure of summing the judges' responses was

used for rankings, with both sets of scores being double-checked by two independent assistants. Following this, E<sub>1</sub> arranged the scores into two 10 x 10 matrices, one for ratings and one for rankings. In this way all of the five judges' responses were added together to represent one score in the matrix (see Table 1).

Table 1  
COMBINED JUDGES' RANKINGS AND RATINGS OF PROTOCOLS

Rankings	62	56	88	42	24	66	68	50
(42)	62	56	88	42	24	66	68	50
34	(30)	61	67	81	66	50	58	70
67	54	(10)	36	69	69	32	69	77
68	65	27	(20)	70	82	42	71	62
81	51	64	62	(10)	43	93	56	52
24	77	81	77	46	(34)	91	34	40
74	44	30	34	76	76	(12)	78	71
54	60	64	80	62	28	70	(36)	50
68	76	81	66	42	54	68	22	(44)
36	78	68	68	64	56	76	58	32

$p = 5.8 \times 10^{-6}$

Ratings	192	181	68	260	367	164	174	269
(288)	192	181	68	260	367	164	174	269
398	(343)	182	162	96	174	258	195	157
148	262	(498)	355	135	153	368	143	93
136	171	373	(426)	125	61	304	134	157
84	203	162	179	(500)	277	37	190	160
378	105	76	92	264	(317)	40	319	293
156	248	380	333	92	136	(458)	112	132
242	141	152	89	147	369	140	(308)	223
166	118	110	164	298	227	192	369	(290)
313	87	141	119	149	213	86	184	352

$p = 4.7 \times 10^{-6}$

In deriving an appropriate statistical evaluation for this "closed deck" series, we assumed nonindependence of target protocols (Kennedy, 1979a). We then utilized the direct-count-of-permutations method to assess the statistical significance of the given matrices (Burdick & Kelly, 1977; Puthoff et al., 1979; Scott, 1972). This statistic computed 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  $5.8 \times 10^{-6}$  for rankings and  $4.7 \times 10^{-6}$  for ratings.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the combined judging, we also looked at each judge's scoring separately. This was done in an attempt to observe the degree of consistency within judges. Since four out of five judges showed significant scoring based on the permutations method for both rankings and ratings, we must conclude that there appears to be a general consistency between judges (see Table 2). It is interesting to note, however, that one judge produced nonsignificant results overall, indicating the importance of multiple judges.

Table 2  
RESULTS OF JUDGES TAKEN INDIVIDUALLY

Judge	Ranking	Rating
Judge 1	$9.4 \times 10^{-6}$	$3.6 \times 10^{-6}$
Judge 2	$1.2 \times 10^{-4}$	$1.8 \times 10^{-3}$
Judge 3	$5.4 \times 10^{-7}$	$1.8 \times 10^{-6}$
Judge 4	.22	.83
Judge 5	$1.7 \times 10^{-3}$	$1.7 \times 10^{-3}$

#### DISCUSSION

In view of the highly successful results of the present study, we might again stress the value of free-response remote viewing as a

<sup>2</sup> While the permutations of rankings and ratings were the planned method of analysis, we also looked at the number of direct matches on the diagonal (see Puthoff et al., 1979). It is interesting to note that this method was, as expected, less sensitive than the permutations method, although it was still significant, with 6 direct hits out of 10, yielding a  $p$  of  $6 \times 10^{-4}$ .

psi-conductive procedure, which is seemingly unaffected by distance. However, since both experimenters have obtained significant results in previous psi experiments (Gruber, 1979; Schlitz & Deacon, 1980), it may well be that the results are not necessarily due to a psi-conductive procedure but to the subjects/experimenters themselves, who, moreover, are the most highly motivated persons to want a positive outcome from the experiment. This is in line with observations made by Puthoff et al. (1979) where they stress that the seriousness of purpose on the part of the subjects may be one factor serving to enhance success in remote viewing.

Another issue which is in question with relation to the present study is the importance of immediate trial-by-trial feedback, since delayed feedback seemed in no way to impair the psi process. It was even noted (Morris, Robblee, Neville, & Bailey, 1978) that trial-by-trial feedback, both positive and negative, had a detrimental effect on the participants. Work by Puthoff et al. (1979), however, seems to show no such apparent problem. Therefore we suggest that a direct comparison be made to gain greater insight into the role of feedback in the experimental setting.

A potential area of controversy should also be pointed out in regard to the present study. This involves the inclusion of the agent's subjective impressions in the judges' descriptions of the target sites. While the authors feel that any criticism based on this point is ill-founded in the present work, the argument goes as follows: 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.

It was the authors' feeling that elimination of the agent's impressions from the information received by the judges narrows the role of telepathy in the experimental design. If the agent is important, then it would make sense that his impressions of the site, as well as activities going on at the location during the trial period, would influence the impressions gained by the distant percipient. It is for this reason that the agent's impressions were included. However, since the issue can be seen as potentially controversial, we are now planning to have the transcripts rejudged without inclusion of the agent's responses. It is our firm conviction that the correspondences between the percipient's

protocols and the geographical target sites is clear enough that the results will not be influenced to any noticeable degree.

In the future, the authors would like to see a greater concern in experimental reporting for the "method of response." Perhaps we should take stock of the earlier work in free response, in which we are able to observe such an interest. Upton Sinclair (1930), for instance, devoted an entire chapter to describing the ways in which Mrs. Sinclair formulated her impressions about an ESP target. Carlson (see White, 1964) reported her impressions in the following way:

At first . . . very dark shadowy lines could be perceived which, when the drawing was opened, proved to be fragments of the drawing—and, later on, the complete drawing. The lines were often very faint and there was a certain strain experienced in trying to see. (p. 38)

Thaw (1892) reported quite differently:

For myself, I cannot describe my sensation as a visualization of any kind. It seemed rather to be by some wholly subjective process than I knew what the agents were looking at. (p. 430)

By *subjective*, we would assume that he was referring to an intuitive sort of reasoning when making his responses.

Although no formal attempt to describe such an area was undertaken within the present study, a brief discussion will be given to E<sub>1</sub>'s method of response throughout the session. It should be noted that 11:00 a.m. was usually not a good time for E<sub>1</sub> and she would often sit down for the session at the very last minute, taking no time to induce any form of relaxation. In some ways, M. S. has noted that her strategy was very similar to that of Mrs. Sinclair, who used a focal image of a rose to begin each session. In the present case, E<sub>1</sub> used the face of E. R. G. as a starting point with which to focus her attention. She would then use a game-type strategy, asking over and over in her mind: "Where is he?". It should be noted that this effort may be considered as something of a state-altering procedure although the remote-viewing design does not require a formal manipulation of one's state of consciousness.

Impressions developed in several ways. Often it was as Carlson described her impressions—the appearance of faint lines frequently followed by a more complete picture. On several occasions, impressions triggered a distinct memory, which was then recounted as the response. It was tempting, in such cases, to avoid an analytical response to the impressions, as the images appeared to be too complete. This was in line with Targ and Puthoff's (1977) warning to

avoid an analysis of information. As an example, we have included the verbal description of the transcript from November 8, 1979, which reads as follows:

Flight path? Red lights. Strong depth of field. Elmar seems detached, cold. A hole in the ground. A candle-shaped thing. Flower—maybe not real. Maybe painted. Outdoors. See sky dark. Windy and cold. Something shooting upward.

After the 15-minute period, the percipient expanded further on her impressions:

[For some reason a boat comes to mind.] The impressions that I had of outdoors and Elmar was at some type of—I don't know if institution is the right word—but some place. Not a private home or anything like that—something—a public facility. He was standing away from the main structure, although he could see it. He might have been in a parking lot or field connected to the structure that identifies the place. I want to say an airport but that just seems too specific. There was activity and people but no one real close to Elmar.

In this example, M. S. obtained a clear picture of an airport drawing she had seen several months earlier. In fact, the target site was the Rome International Airport, where the outbound experimenter had been standing on a little hill aside from the structure. Near the hill were holes in the ground, where clandestine diggers searched for Roman coins. Although this is a striking protocol, many of the transcripts contained equally provoking content, as is reflected in the statistical analysis.

In order to further our investigation into individual methods of response, we suggest that a phenomenological approach might prove useful. A possible means of incorporating this approach into the experimental design would be an inventory, aimed at an understanding of how the experience of each participant (whether percipient, agent, or experimenter) is organized. That is, it should attempt to establish a foundation for describing the basic structures of consciousness involved in the remote-viewing experience.

A final point should be made in relation to the present work. Although the protocols from this series indicate strong evidence for ESP, we cannot neglect the hypothesis that PK may have played a role in the experimental outcome. As pointed out by Stanford (1981) an experimenter influence on the RNG used to generate the targets on each experimental day cannot be eliminated from consideration. This would be especially true if psi is, in fact, goal-oriented—detached, as it were, from the complexity of the task (Kennedy, 1978, 1979b).

Therefore, any conclusion about the fruitfulness of the free-response remote-viewing procedure must take this factor into account.

In conclusion: the study provides further evidence for the existence of psi. The results are strong and certainly warrant further investigations into the remote-viewing procedure. Perhaps this design may offer a productive avenue into more process-oriented investigations. The authors are therefore looking forward to a follow-up of the present ideas.

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