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MEMO

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TO:

FROM: Dr. H.E. Puthoff and R. Targ

SUBJECT: Ornstein Book Review

1. I wish to bring to your attention an unfavorable review of our book Mind-Reach written by Ornstein for the New York Times Book Review (Enc. 1), and, equally important, the conditions surrounding that review that place it in perspective. (Ornstein is best known as a popularizer of the hemispheric specialization and split-brain research pioneered by the laboratory work of Sperry, Gazzaniga, Bogen, Kimura, and others.)
2. His main point is that we oversell the ease with which remote viewing can be accomplished, when, according to him, no one else has replicated our work. To the embarrassment of Ornstein at this point, the facts clearly show that he had not done his homework, since six laboratories had replicated our experiments, four published well in advance of his review.¹⁻⁴ We score Ornstein heavily for this inexcusable faux pas in our Letter to the Editor, N.Y. Times Book Review, to be published March 27 (Enc. 2). As far as the accusation that we had "done more harm perhaps" to our position and the field, I only need cite a letter written to us by Prof. Schmeidler of the Psychology Department, CCNY, a leader in the field and pre-eminent among American parapsychologists and well known to be one of the most conservative with respect to our work (Enc. 3).
3. Since we were ourselves shocked at the tone of the review (all previous reviews had been positive: See Enc. 4 which includes Kirkus Reviews, Library Journal, Publisher's Weekly, and a statement from Charles Panati, Science Editor at Newsweek), we began checking with Ornstein's associates to ascertain what was going on. We found that in the last six months there have been dramatic changes in Ornstein's life: He has abruptly disconnected with his long-term research colleague at Langley-Porter, Dr. David Galen; he left California and moved to New York; and is now completely separated from the research laboratory, devoting his full efforts to starting a popular psychology magazine on the basis of a three-million dollar investment by the publisher Harcourt Brace, all following a ridiculing review in the New York Times Book Review of his latest book (Enc. 5).

4. Of more concern to us--indeed a very serious concern from an ethical and scientific viewpoint--(although it is a minor point in the review) is Ornstein's statement concerning his inability to replicate one of our experiments (an EEG strobelight experiment) in which the tenor of his remarks would lead one to believe that perhaps we had exaggerated the significance of this experiment. In truth, Ornstein, who carried out the experiment under a subcontract from us, reported a positive result to us and to our Navy contractor (Enc. 6). We at SRI, reanalyzing his data using our own FFT facilities, took exception to his claim of a positive result, and in our own paper summarizing his data (Enc. 7) we were the ones who took a more conservative position, labeling the result as lacking definitiveness, a position we informed Ornstein of before his review.
5. A true measure of the response to our work, our protocols, and our contributions to the field by established scientists of repute is summed up best by what Dr. Margaret Mead had to say in her introduction to our book (Enc. 8).
6. Since publication of our book we are deluged with individual successes, as in Enc. 9.

References

1. Arthur Hastings and David Hurt, "A confirmatory remote viewing in a group setting," Proc. IEEE, Vol. 64, October 1976.
2. Thomas Whitson, David Bogart, John Palmer, and Charles Tart, "Preliminary experiments in group remote viewing," Proc. IEEE, Vol. 64, October 1976.
3. Jacques Vallee, Arthur Hastings, and Gerold Askevold, "Remote viewing experiments through computer conferencing," Proc. IEEE, Vol. 64, October 1976.
4. John Bisaha and B.J. Dunne, "Precognitive remote viewing in the Chicago area, a replication of the Stanford experiment," Research in Parapsychology 1976. Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press Inc. (in press). Presented at the annual Parapsychological Association conference, Utrecht, August 1976.