

LEADING POINTS MADE ABOUT SPENCER BROWN'S REPORT

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Unfortunately no recording could be made of the continuation discussion on August 1. We therefore ventured to offer this *on our own responsibility* and without having been able to consult all those who participated. It has been cast in the shape of a list of leading points made in the plenary, the continuation, and private discussions. We apologize for any distortions or omissions there may be.

1. It became clear that we can learn something valuable, both for future experiment and future theorizing, from the Spencer Brown material.

2. It was generally agreed that the outstanding work of Dr. Soal with Stewart and Shackleton, and perhaps now some other work, was not affected by (could not be explained away by) Spencer Brown's arguments or experiments. Because of:

a) the enormous overall deviations, and, *most importantly*,
b) the numerous and (with each subject) consistent variations in scores when conditions were separately varied; amply illustrated in Dr. Soal's paper (see p. 17, below).

But Spencer Brown was not alone in thinking that no degree of statistical significance *by itself* (see a) could be regarded as more than a *not necessarily infallible* guide as to where to look for "inductive correlations"; which may in the end not be found. By "inductive correlations" is here meant a consistent tendency for certain predictable things to happen in certain static conditions; and not to happen when and insofar as those conditions are varied in certain definite ways (see b).

3. Spencer Brown's experimental results—so far as the details are now known—show a quite unexpected property of standard random number tables; and suggest that the levels of significance often previously regarded as sufficient in scientific work are not in fact sufficient.

4. It is urgent that very many more experiments of this sort should be done both by him and by others, and the results reported as soon as possible.

5. Spencer Brown's argument that the PK claims were self-frustrating was variously challenged on logical grounds (Mundle, Flew, etc.).

6. A long discussion resulted from an ambiguity in the word "cross-check" as meaning scoring a set of guesses against a) any set of "targets" for which they were not intended by the experimenter, or b) a set of "targets" wholly distinct from the set with which the guesses to be scored were associated.

7. The implications of the rejection or "starring" by the constructors of standard random number tables, etc., of certain portions produced by their methods of construction should be examined for their effects on the applications of the calculus of probability.

a) It was suggested that this pruning may account for the results of Spencer Brown's experiments (Mundle, etc.).

b) It was also suggested that on the contrary this might help to account for our *success* in applying a calculus based on an infinite random series in cases where only a finite series is used (Flew and Scriven). Though this suggestion may well not be incompatible with that in a) above.

8. In connection with 6, above, Spencer Brown said that he was anxious to re-examine the Greenwood series of cross-checks for positions effect, displacements, and any other correspondences which have been discovered or suggested in quantitative experimentation.