

TRAINING METHODS FOR PSI INDUCTION

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ULLMAN: I want to express a note of appreciation to Dr. Cavanna and Dr. Pahnke who recorded Dr. Rýzl's participation for us. Please feel free to interrupt Dr. Rýzl at any point. Although he isn't here to respond personally, we are able to stop his presentation if you would like to comment on anything Dr. Rýzl says.

RÝZL (tape recorded): My best regards to all of you at the conference. I would like to express my deep disappointment at not being able to attend; my government did not give me permission to leave the country.

I believe that one of the most urgent tasks in parapsychology is to get extrasensory-perception phenomena under conscious control.

In my experiments, I tried to get this conscious control by means of hypnosis.¹ I should like to stress here that hypnosis is used only as a method to induce a specific, necessary state of consciousness—that state of consciousness which I consider necessary for the manifestation of ESP. This method of training by means of hypnosis presents some difficulties. I have observed mainly two limiting factors which restrict its application. One is the fact that not every person can be brought into the necessary state of consciousness by means of hypnosis. The second limiting factor is that the training method, as I have proposed it, is a long-lasting process which takes a considerable time. Many subjects do not have enough patience to undergo this lengthy training.

Disregarding this second point of finding and maintaining good motivation, as it is more of a psychological or sociological nature, I would like to concentrate on the first point. The question arises: Is it possible to make hypnosis work even in subjects not sufficiently susceptible? Here,

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of course, the possibility of using various pharmacologically active drugs that might help to increase ESP abilities in man comes to mind. This idea is supported by observations of aboriginal practices and magical evocations which often mention pharmacologically active substances. Surely there are many substances that can be considered suitable for our purposes. I should like to speak about LSD, which many authors consider a very suitable substance for eliciting ESP.² My experience with LSD is relatively small; it consists of one experiment in which I personally received 200 micrograms of LSD, and a recent experiment in which I tried to hypnotize a subject under LSD. In spite of this relatively small experience, I am going to try and sketch some analogies or possibly discrepancies between the state I have observed in myself and the one I consider essential for eliciting ESP by means of hypnosis.

As a matter of fact, hypnosis per se does not elicit ESP. It is only the means for inducing a specific state of consciousness which, unfortunately, is very difficult to define in words. Trying to define it, I would say that it is a state of extensive inhibition of spontaneous mental processes; a state of appeasement of thoughts; of depression of the mental tonus, if we can express it in this way. At the same time the attention of the subject is aroused and focused on a specific task. It is very difficult to induce such a state by pure concentration, but hypnosis has proved efficient in some cases. But this is not everything. In trying to get ESP under conscious control, it is necessary that this state of appeasement of thoughts be easily changed into a state where the subject is able to judge the quality of his impressions logically and report them to the experimenter.

When we are using hypnosis, both of these conditions are fulfilled. I have a feeling that the LSD state is, from various aspects, quite different from what I consider essential for the conscious control of ESP.

I'm afraid I shall not be able to express myself adequately, but I would say that the LSD state looks like an overexcitation of the entire mental sphere, like a reactivation of all the subject's past experiences. Traces of previous impressions which exist in the brain of the subject are activated and vividly experienced, reaching conscious expression. But I would say that the state necessary for the manifestation of ESP is something more than the mere activation of existing traces in the brain. It is a state in which the brain must be activated not for past experiences, but for accepting signals coming from the outer world through channels we do not know.

In the hypnotic experiments this state of activation of the receptivity to ESP stimuli is subjectively experienced as a state of emptying of the

mind, of diminished consciousness. It is a state of mental inhibition, accompanied at the same time by a state of expectancy, of waiting for incoming signals; the internal experience of the subject is closely similar to that of recollecting something. We could call it concentration, though it is a rather passive state. In this state of passivity, there is nevertheless an expressed conscious activity aimed at experiencing the desired impressions. In the LSD state, on the other hand, the subject—as far as I could judge—is unable to be actively receptive to incoming impressions.

From what I have said, it appears that the LSD state, characterized by an immense flow of thoughts, is opposite to the appeasement of thoughts which is an essential condition for the manifestation of ESP in the hypnotic state. In addition, the difficulty in consciously governing this automatic flow of thoughts does not allow the subject to concentrate properly on the ESP task.

Another difficulty is that in the LSD state one cannot establish proper contact with the subject. The overwhelming flood of experiences and ideas makes it difficult for the subject to express himself and verbalize.

In my opinion, these features make LSD very difficult to apply to quantitative card-calling tests and in other experiments, as of traveling clairvoyance. Some of the difficulties mentioned seem to be overcome in experiments in which emotionally charged targets are used.³ The working hypothesis of such experiments is that in the flood of associations, which consist mainly of previous impressions, the selection of these associations can be influenced somehow by ESP. But the associations which I observed in my personal experience, although very numerous, all related only to my personal past. As far as I could judge, there were no more similarities between the experiences and the target objects than could be allowed for by chance. So, my personal experience seems to speak against the applicability of LSD in ESP tests, but I am fully conscious that we cannot generalize from this limited experience.

Furthermore, the experiments I have mentioned were carried out entirely during the climax of the LSD experience. It is quite possible that in other phases of the LSD state, mainly in the terminal phase, conditions might be more suitable.

The question, in my opinion, still remains open. Here are the objectives for future research: First, to find the most suitable individual dose of the pharmacologically active substance. Second, to find the most suitable phase in the process of the action of the drug. Third, and this I think is most important, to find a more suitable substance, as LSD has not been

claimed to be the ideal substance for our purposes. In my opinion, we must concentrate on finding other, more suitable substances among those already existing, or possibly synthesize new substances for our purposes. It might also be advisable to try combinations of substances administered together or in sequence. Perhaps combining inhibiting with exciting substances might be suitable. Allow me to specify here what characteristic qualities this drug or combination of drugs should have.

First, the drug should be able to inhibit cortical activity for a short period of time in the sense of depressing spontaneous mental processes, depressing the stream of thoughts which is common in the normal waking state. Second, a longer-lasting inhibiting effect should be exerted on subcortical centers, to obtain depression of the general tonus of consciousness and, if possible, to remove or block incoming sensory stimuli. Third, it should enable us to excite particular spheres of the cortex—the ones concerned with our immediate ESP tasks. If necessary, it should even be possible to bring this limited excitability up to the point of eliciting sensory hallucinations. Fourth, it seems necessary that rational insight should be maintained.

I'm afraid it will be difficult to find a substance that could fulfill such complex requirements. Probably, there will still be a necessity to induce a suitable state of consciousness by verbal suggestion. For this reason, we must require that the substance should also increase the suggestibility of the subject.

Considerations of this kind inspired an experiment performed in Prague shortly before this conference. This experiment concerned the joint application of LSD and hypnosis. The results of this experiment have not yet been fully evaluated, but I am presenting it merely as a suggestion for future experimental work in this area.

The subject of our experiment was a woman, 28 years old, who is currently under ESP training by means of hypnosis. At first she was difficult to hypnotize, yet after a series of sittings she was brought under good hypnotic control and is now easily hypnotizable after a simple word signal. As I have already stated, this subject is being prepared for ESP experiments in hypnosis, but until now did not manifest this ability.

After the ingestion of 80 micrograms of LSD (this represents 2 micrograms per kilogram of body weight), she entered a state in which she was easily hypnotizable. Although we were unable to observe an ESP manifestation in this experiment, there were several interesting observations which deserve to be mentioned.

First, it was possible by means of simple hypnotic suggestion to partially abolish the effects of LSD and to suppress the chaotic stream of impressions. This brought the subject closer to the state necessary for the manifestation of ESP.

Second, during the terminal phases of the action of the drug, it was possible still by hypnotic suggestion to bring the subject back to the climax of the experience. We were thus able to influence the LSD experience, both positively as well as negatively, to a considerable degree. Furthermore, in the course of the LSD experiment, strong suggestions were administered to the subject under hypnosis to the effect that she would be able to re-experience the LSD state again in future hypnotic sessions without taking drugs. We hoped that this could help her to find a way to manifest ESP ability.

Of course, only time will tell us to what degree these positive suggestions will be effective.

By this, I conclude my report. I would like to add a word of thanks to Drs. Pahnke and Cavanna, who gave me the opportunity to speak to you at least in this indirect way.

RAO: I am planning to visit Dr. Rýzl on my way back to India; if you have any comments, I shall be very happy to convey them to him.

LUDWIG: In connection with Dr. Rýzl's interest in combining hypnosis and LSD, it should be brought to his attention that a considerable amount of work has already been done in this area.⁴

JOHNSON: Does Dr. Pahnke know why this young woman of 28 was chosen for these experiments? Had she manifested any ESP ability before this, or was she chosen only because she was willing to undergo LSD and hypnosis?

PAHNKE: I think the latter is the reason. She was willing, and she was a good hypnotic subject.

JOHNSON: I don't know a great deal except my personal experience, but I am quite certain that you are born with the gift of ESP. It cannot be cultivated in any individual, unless it is already inborn within them.

BELOFF: May I reply to Mr. Johnson? This may be so. It is one of the really big question marks in parapsychology. Is it a faculty that we're born with, or is it a faculty that we can, by certain means, develop? Dr. Rýzl belongs to that school of thought which says that any person can,

under certain conditions, be brought to develop an ESP ability as long as he is a willing subject. I don't think the evidence is clear-cut; therefore, the question mark remains.

JOHNSON: Thank you very much. I would have thought that experiments would be made first with subjects who had shown some form of psychic ability under normal conditions. If ESP were increased with these subjects, then it would be appropriate to investigate any other subjects.

MUNDLE: Could Dr. Pahnke give a more explicit reply to Mr. Johnson's question about this particular subject? What level of scoring did she have under normal conditions? And over what period?

PAHNKE: She had undergone about 20 hours of preparatory hypnotic sittings with no scoring attempted. Actually the subjects that do score after Dr. Rýzl's training, score at a level of around 10 percent above chance, which is not that significant; it's significant enough, but it's nothing dramatic. Mr. Johnson is thinking of the dramatic results you might get with someone who was born with this ability. Perhaps you couldn't train somebody to be that good, but with the training you might succeed in pushing the scoring slightly above normal, just to be statistically significant.

JOHNSON: I entirely agree with you, Dr. Pahnke. I think that you can teach people to play the piano, but you cannot turn them into musicians.

PAHNKE: Dr. Rýzl has not worked with people who had psychic ability. He thought that for a scientific investigation, randomly selected university students would represent a more suitable class of subjects.

BELOFF: Unfortunately, it's a fact that of the hundreds of subjects he mentions, he has only published data on two, and only one has sustained high scoring for a long period of time.^{5,6} Most parapsychologists look upon Dr. Rýzl as an enormously lucky man to have found 2 subjects in, say, 500, who give him results. I don't know in the length and the breadth of the British Isles any single subject who could sustain an above-chance score. So, while I believe that Mr. Johnson's advice is very sound, to begin with subjects who have the natural ability and develop it further, the implication is that most parapsychologists would be stymied from the start—they wouldn't have any subjects to work with.

CAVANNA: First he tried to obtain a particular state of mind, an altered state of consciousness in his subjects. As he didn't obtain this in

the hundreds of people with whom he tried, he was forced to work with the two persons who gave good results.

BELOFF: We still don't know whether these two exceptional subjects were born with ESP and merely waited until Dr. Rýzl came along to bring it out in them, or whether he has found a real training method. This is the question mark I spoke about, and it remains a question mark.

PAHNKE: There is another reason why he was left with such a small number of subjects. He used university students, and many of his subjects quit after a few sessions, because they got very bored with the procedure. He also experienced another type of difficulty. He told me, for instance, that one of his subjects, a medical student, in the first hypnotic session scored 25 out of 25. After the session, when Dr. Rýzl told the subject, the student got very frightened and never came back.

RAO: In his published report, Dr. Rýzl mentions that about 10 percent of his subjects attained this high level of scoring. I believe his impressions are based on experimental results. However, what I think is even more important is the similarity between the Yoga approach to achieve super-normal powers and the instructions that Dr. Rýzl gives to his subjects during his hypnotic training. He tries to induce appeasement of thought, relaxation, and then to make his subjects hallucinate—asking them to discriminate between veridical hallucinations concerned with the target and other subconscious material which might interfere with the perception. One ought to try and use hypnosis to dispense with the extensive preliminary phases of Yoga training.

If, using Rýzl's method, with or without drugs, one succeeded in producing a state of mind in which the subject was able to filter out all sensory input as well as perturbations coming from his own mind and reach selective concentration, we would be in a much better position to do experimental work.

ULLMAN: I think Dr. Rýzl, with his technique, is trying to induce a state which is very similar to one occurring naturally during sleep, namely, the dream state. A point he made was that of inhibiting higher cortical activity, which is just what happens during sleep. He speaks of filtering out sensation and sensory input, which is what occurs during the dream state. His third point is concerned with arousing highly focused attention, and I think this characterizes the intensity with which concrete visual imagery emerges during the dream process. Finally, he advocates the availability of

some recall mechanism for his subjects, which we now can easily achieve in relation to dreaming with our present neurophysiological monitoring techniques.

BELOFF: There is one very big difference here. He lays very great stress on this "appeasement of thoughts," which surely is something quite alien to the dream state, where one gets a flow of imagery.

ULLMAN: I am not so sure of that. Dr. Rýzl speaks of a state of appeasement of thoughts coupled with highly focused attention. This precisely matches Pavlov's conception of the dreaming process,⁷ i.e., cortical inhibition except for a highly focused cortical area.

TART: As Dr. Ullman said, the dream state is ideal in many ways, but as Dr. Beloff pointed out, there is a constant flow of imagery rather than a blank screen. Perhaps one could use posthypnotic suggestion with selected subjects in order to focus the dream imagery on to the ESP task. I've done some work that shows that you can achieve significant control over dream content with posthypnotic suggestion.

ULLMAN: Mrs. Garrett would like to make a comment.

GARRETT: From my personal experience, I would say that I was trained to do regularly what I already did spontaneously. Before I went to the College of Psychic Science, I had spontaneous clairvoyant and telepathic experiences. I saw dead relatives and used to give this information to my aunt, who always insisted I was making up stories, and indeed tried for many years to punish me. This did not affect me because I knew what I knew. When I was about 23 years old, I thought that I must really find out what was the matter. I was married then, and my husband disagreed with all these things that I foresaw. I saw my oldest son dead three months before he died. I saw my second son dead six months before he died. I saw all these things as though they were on a screen. My husband took me to several psychiatrists: some said I wasn't having enough sex experience, others thought I had too much. So I began at a very early age not to be very skeptical of myself. I did, however, go to the British College of Psychic Science, where I worked with a well-known spiritualist. This was a great conflict for me, because I knew that people came to me filled with guilt complexes, which appeared clearly to me. Having to maintain good manners, I would not say to them, "What I am going to tell you is what *you* want me to tell you." Ten years of this work made me highly skeptical

of the use of spiritualism. What I was doing was simply going into a passive state, in which I was able to see exactly what was going on in the mind of the sitter or of the experimenter. So in order to please my masters, I gave them what they wanted.

MUNDLE: Thank you for a most illuminating contribution. I wonder if we could ask Mr. Johnson to speak in personal terms of his experience.

JOHNSON: I don't know if Mrs. Garrett's experiences began very early; mine did, and this is why I asked that question about Dr. Rýzl and his subject. I am extremely interested in the apparent ability of hypnotists to increase the dissociation of mind of a sensitive. But I think that a person has to be sensitive before dissociation can take place. I do it automatically. I don't think that this is a process of self-hypnosis. I am simply able to shut out everything else in the room except the person I am speaking to, which is a dissociation, or withdrawal from material surroundings. I suspect Mrs. Garrett does exactly the same thing. I was hypnotized only once, and it was very interesting. It is a field I would very much like to explore further.

LEVINE: I think that Mrs. Garrett's comments fit rather well with the concept of "programming" presented by Dr. Aaronson. I think we are "conditioned" to see things in a particular way in everyday living. This is a very efficient way of going about one's business. It eliminates most of the excess stimuli that are not relevant for ordinary life. We have certain metaphors built in, so that we experience reality in a certain way. Perhaps LSD alters this "programming" by its impact on sensory input or on our mechanisms for receiving information. When this happens, we certainly can see things in a different way than we ordinarily do. It may be that because of the flow of stimuli, this is not the best time for ESP phenomena to occur. But once one has had an LSD experience, one can become more willing to see things in different ways. Also, one can become more able to get outside of oneself.

MUNDLE: These two people who have these powers seem to be describing the same thing in different words. Mr. Johnson speaks of "dissociation." Mrs. Garrett speaks of "getting out of herself." Could we ask Mr. Johnson if Mrs. Garrett's description corresponds with his own feelings?

JOHNSON: This is exactly what I meant. I think we have merely used different terms.

TART: May I make a comment on what I call the economics of research?

Let's just assume that hypnotic training may help to develop ESP in some people. Let's also take as a hypothesis that it may not work with everyone, but only with those people who were born with a psychic gift. Finding these people then becomes our problem. Our present methods of finding gifted subjects are quite haphazard. We wait until they blunder into the laboratory, or if we're working with hypnosis, we try hypnosis on one subject after another, which is time and money consuming. The ideal thing to do would be to use large-scale hypnotizability testing, since group tests are now available,⁸ and screen 1000 subjects this way. Then take the top 5 percent and look at their past histories for records of psychic experiences.

OSMOND: I think the other way around is another possibility. About 10 percent of all people have had psychic experiences spontaneously. It would be easier to get that 10 percent out, and start from that point.

FINER: May I ask Mrs. Garrett a question? Do you have the ability to detect who has these gifts? Would it be possible for you, working together with Dr. Tart, to get a quick analysis of possible sensitives?

GARRETT: Yes. Very easily. As a matter of fact, Dr. Tart himself is an exceptionally sensitive personality. I believe he would do exceedingly well under hypnosis.

TART: Unfortunately I am a very poor hypnotic subject.

GARRETT: You have a very great deal of this quality yourself. Spontaneous things happen to you which you brush away, but there they are just the same.

TART: Oh, no, I don't brush them away; I take careful notes!

ULLMAN: I think we'll stand adjourned until tomorrow morning.

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