

Results of 3/10/2001 Aura Viewing Experiment

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You may recall the article that appeared in the MN MUFON newsletter in the summer of 2000, which described the results of an experiment which we conducted during the June, 2000 meeting of Minnesota MUFON. In this experiment we asked a group of six volunteers to view the aura of another volunteer. Each of the viewers filled out a standardized form describing the aura, and their ability to see this effect. These results were then tabulated and analyzed. The results turned out to be quite surprising.

At the March 2001 MN MUFON meeting, we repeated this experiment, this time with 12 volunteers. This was done as a dry run for a similar but more involved experiment to be conducted this spring with the National Guild of Hypnotists, in which we will try to measure the ability to see the human aura under various circumstances.

The human aura is described in many texts, both ancient and modernⁱⁱ - both in biophysical terms, and in terms of metaphysics and religion. The actual mechanism behind the human aura - and indeed, whether it actually exists, is not clearly established. However, there appears to be enough evidence to suggest that there is a bona-fide phenomenon present. The goal of this experiment was to have a group of volunteers observe the aura of a test subject and describe it in a standardized way. The purpose was to determine the degree of consistency between what each volunteer observed.

The subject being observed was seated about 10 feet away from the viewers, in a position such that he could be clearly seen against a featureless white wall. The viewers were asked to observe his aura (if they were able to do so) and complete a short questionnaire establishing a standardized description of the effect. The questionnaire contained 9 questions defining the aura's color, shape, intensity and time variation. On a second page was space for a sketch of the aura.

In the literature, it is suggested that a person's aura is strongly dependent upon his/her mental or emotional state. Thus, it was desirable to have the subject be in a known state of mind at the time of the experiment. I therefore asked him to imagine a very pleasant scene, known only to himself. (Note: Since the subject being observed was an excellent hypnotic candidate, I had earlier hypnotized him and given him a posthypnotic suggestion to recall a pleasant memory on cue). At the start of the experiment, I gave him the cue words, and the volunteers immediately viewed his aura and filled out the questionnaire

All viewers indicated that they were able to see the subject's aura. (Note: One viewer also included an extensive description of PSI impressions which he obtained from the subject. The subject subsequently described these as being very accurate.) The aura was observed by all to be brighter than the neutral white background. Nearly all described it to be primarily pale/grayish/white, with some describing a blue to blue green overtone, one describing it as red and another as yellow. Most observed a white (one person also described yellow/gold) inner band of about 1 to 2 inches around the head. Many observed a larger more diffuse outer layer, which was primarily above the head. This area was typically described as white/gray/pale, but

also having overtone colors such as blue/green. Another person described pale pink/purple at the edge of this outer region.

Nearly all of the participants found it relatively easy to see the aura. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being easiest to see auras) viewers reported an average of 6.38 (roughly grouped at 6 +/- 2). However, reports of the strength/ intensity of the aura, also observed on a scale of 1(transparent) to 10(strong/solid) were evenly distributed across the entire range, with groupings at the lowest and the highest intensity ends of the range. The average was 4.5.

The fuzziness/sharpness of the boundary was measured in a range of 1 to 10 with 1 being sharp and 10 being fuzzy: An average of 4.15 was observed, with a wide cluster of observations between 1 and 6. Some observed two distinct layers to the aura. Those who did, rated the boundary sharpness of the inner band at an average of 1.875 (very sharply defined), and the outer band at an average sharpness of 6.5 (very diffuse). Those who saw only a single band rated its sharpness at an average of 4.125 (moderately sharp), close to the overall average of 4.15.

Viewers reported that the width of the aura averaged about 3.4 inches, with reports ranging from 1/2 to 5 inches. Those who observed two bands of light, described the average widths of the inner and outer bands as 1.06 inches, and 5.0 inches, respectively. Generally viewers reported that the aura changed very little in intensity and characteristic, at a very slow rate. Typically, the inner band was observed to be nearly constant. Whereas the outer band was often reported as slowly sweeping (3 observations), dissolving (3 observations), shifting (3 observations), or shimmering (2 observations). Four people reported no variation.

The rate of variation on a scale 1 (none), to 10 (rapid) was an average 3.36, with most below 4. Two additional outlying points were at values 5, one at 8.5 and one at 9.5, indicating that these four observers saw some more rapid variation. The one person describing the variation of both layers described the inner layer as constant, and the outer layer as 8 (rapidly varying)

The degree of variation on a scale of 1 to 10 was described as an average of 3.5, with a large cluster of observations between 1 and 3, and another at 5 +/- 1. The one person describing variation of both layers described the degree of inner layer variation as 1 (constant) and the outer layer as 6 (high degree of variation).

Conclusion: In this limited sample, there was a consistent, moderately high ability to see the aura. Many observed two layers around the head, a strong inner layer, and a more diffuse outer layer - while others observed only one layer of intermediate thickness. There were also a number of distinct but consistent groups of descriptions, with respect to the color, width, and stability of the aura, roughly corresponding to an inner and an outer band. There was considerable variation in the observed degree of intensity/transparency of the aura, the width, and the boundary sharpness.

What the human aura is, is also not known. Some suggest that it is nothing more than an optical illusion caused by the retina's processing of color contrast. Others believe that it is an electromagnetic, or related field phenomenon. Still others claim that there is a more subtle metaphysical explanation. Whatever the aura may be, all people in our experiment were able to

see something, with a moderately high degree of consistency between them. This trial was the prototype for a number of future experiments which we hope to conduct within the National Guild of Hypnotists. It is hoped that these will yield some very interesting data on a disputed, yet very fascinating area of human perception.

Final Notes:

This experiment was the second in a series of preparatory runs for an experiment to be conducted at the Minnesota Institute of Hypnosis and Hypnotherapy in May of 2001. My heartfelt thanks go out to the volunteers who participated in this experiment, both as viewers, and the subject whose aura was being viewed. Their help was invaluable. I hope that they found this experiment to be as interesting as I did.

End Notes:

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ii Book References:

Much of the description of the human aura is taken from the books:

- "Auras (See them in only 60 Seconds)", by Mark Smith
 - "You are Psychic", by Peter A. Sanders
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