

EMPIRICAL OBSERVATION

Steven L. Fahrion, Ph.D.

“There is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses.”

—Aristotle

Aristotle defined a relationship between human insight and the senses, pointing to the importance of empiricism in human knowledge in a way that has strongly influenced human thought even until the 20th Century. Empiricism is concerned with experienced observation. Yet experience implies an experienter who is conscious of that which is experienced.

In this issue we advance along an un-blazed trail of direct, observed scientific experiences that are often themselves outside the experience and expectations of “consensual reality,” the average person may know little of the journey we have undertaken together. Each of these articles concerns observations of apparent “field effects” that challenge conventional understandings of what is possible and that bring with them an element of surprise.

When we are surprised we often seek to protect ourselves in a cloak of theory, a mantle of explanation that may distract us from the observable facts by shrouding us in comfortable, familiar notions that may in fact have little to do with the actual observations, however much our theory seems to explain. Each of the papers in this issue challenge us to “stick with the facts,” to own the possible truth of the reported observations, and to explore our own resistances to accepting these observations. Is it possible to simply “sit with the facts” without feeling compelled to attempt to explain? Does such a prospect engender discomfort in ourselves? Where and why?

Intrapersonal Hand-Energy Registration: Evidence for Implicit Performance and Perception by Gary Schwartz, Linda Russek and Justin Beltran provides an experiential test of the ability one individual to blindly detect the presence of another's hand from several inches away. While the tendency to propound some sort of theory of field effects or other ideas about underlying mechanisms to explain the experimenters' observations is compelling, the authors avoid this temptation while fitting the facts into general systems theory. Hopefully this paper will stimulate paradigmatic investigations that ultimately will advance our understanding of the phenomenon under study here.

In *CranioSacral Therapy: Part III: In the Future*, John Upledger concludes a provocative three-part perspective on this now widely-used form of energy medicine treatment. Seminal indications of fertile territories for future exploration are examined, along with very early observations of work in progress on inter-species collaboration in healing processes. An almost mystical sense of trust and hopefulness pervades these observations and instills a sense that we are not alone on the path if only we can open our eyes and take direction from observed experience.

Dean Radin presents an intriguing experiential investigation, *Possible Influence of the Geomagnetic Field on Sports Performance*, that considers connections between even quite small variations in the field within which we live and effective human behavior.

This issue also contains Alyce Green's *Biofeedback Methodology in Psychophysiological Self-Regulation*, the first example we are publishing of an expected series of influential classic papers in our field. Alyce was one of a handful of early pioneers of biofeedback who, together with her husband Elmer Green, was a recipient of the first National Institutes of Health grant for biofeedback research. She was an astute observer who contributed much to our understanding of the process of biofeedback and of the importance of the will in psychophysiological self-regulation.

Finally, in *Simultaneous Psychophysiological Assessments of Hawaiian Healer and Client During Healing*, Thomas Bearden treats us to a technological *tour de force* case study, an exemplary offering in our series of controlled case studies. Such studies are much more difficult to conduct and to analyze than appears

on the surface, not just because of the technology required, but also because it is often difficult to handle the process of observation in a way that does not fundamentally alter the phenomenon under study—healing. In addition to observations psychophysiological processes, this paper aids our process toward a measurement and analysis model to assure reliability in statistical handling of such data.

Taken together each of these papers helps us to explore the ground-level building block of the scientific process: empirical observation. Modern science is grounded in empiricism, no matter how much we may then apply reason and logic to fundamental facts in our chosen domain. Empiricism in our modern world at times seems synonymous with application of measurement technology to phenomena, but technology is not essential. What *is* essential is honesty and openness, and an absence of pre-judgement in the process of observation. Beyond these essential qualities for scientific investigation we enter the realm of the will, the hand that directs the searchlight of attention to those phenomena that reveal the meaning-structure of the world we observe around us. Not all observations are equally of value to us. Some lead us beyond the mundane and the certain into the experience of surprise. Surprise accompanies the transformation of the unknown into the known. At times it seems that if anything marks the trail we follow, it is this very element of surprise.

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