CSICOP and the Skeptics: An Overview[1]

GEORGE P. HANSEN[2]

ABSTRACT: The Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP) has become the most publicly visible institution engaged in the debate on the paranormal. Initially CSICOP was primarily a scholarly body, but soon after its beginning it adopted a popular approach that fostered a more broadly based social movement. It actively promoted the formation of local societies with similar aims. Both CSICOP and the local groups have some distinguishing features. Prestigious scholars are affiliated with these organizations, a disproportionate number of magicians are involved, the groups are dominated by men, and many members hold religious views that are antagonistic to the paranormal. Despite the name of the organization, actual research is a very low priority of the Committee. In fact, CSICOP instituted a policy against doing research itself. CSICOP's highest priority has been to influence the media. Its rhetoric and activities are designed to appeal to a broad audience rather than to scientists who investigate unusual or controversial phenomena. Recently, the Committee broadened its focus to include areas outside the paranormal.

In the last 15 years, the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal (CSICOP[3]) has become a major force in the debate on the paranormal. It has generated considerable attention, not only in the popular media but also in scientific forums. The readership of its magazine, the *Skeptical Inquirer* (*SI*), has grown to over 35,000 subscribers in 62 countries. CSICOP is now the most well-recognized institution commenting on the paranormal; it claims to receive scores of inquiries daily. A number of local groups have formed. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the dramatic growth. The data suggest a social movement of considerable influence.

There are several reasons CSICOP has flourished. Much of the organizational success can be attributed to the dynamic leadership of philosopher Paul Kurtz, the publicity skills of magician James Randi, and the wide influence of writer Martin Gardner. Although none of these three are scientists, CSICOP has attracted prestigious scientists who serve as fig-

[1] An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 30th Annual Convention of the Parapsychological Association, Edinburgh University, Edinburgh, Scotland, August 5–8, 1987.

[2] I would like to thank Michaeleen Maher, Keith Harary, Robert Durant, and Marcello Truzzi for commenting on earlier drafts of this paper. I would also like to thank Marcello Truzzi, William Rauscher, Jerome Clark, Diane Morton, and Tom McIver for providing materials.

[3] Pronounced "sigh cop."

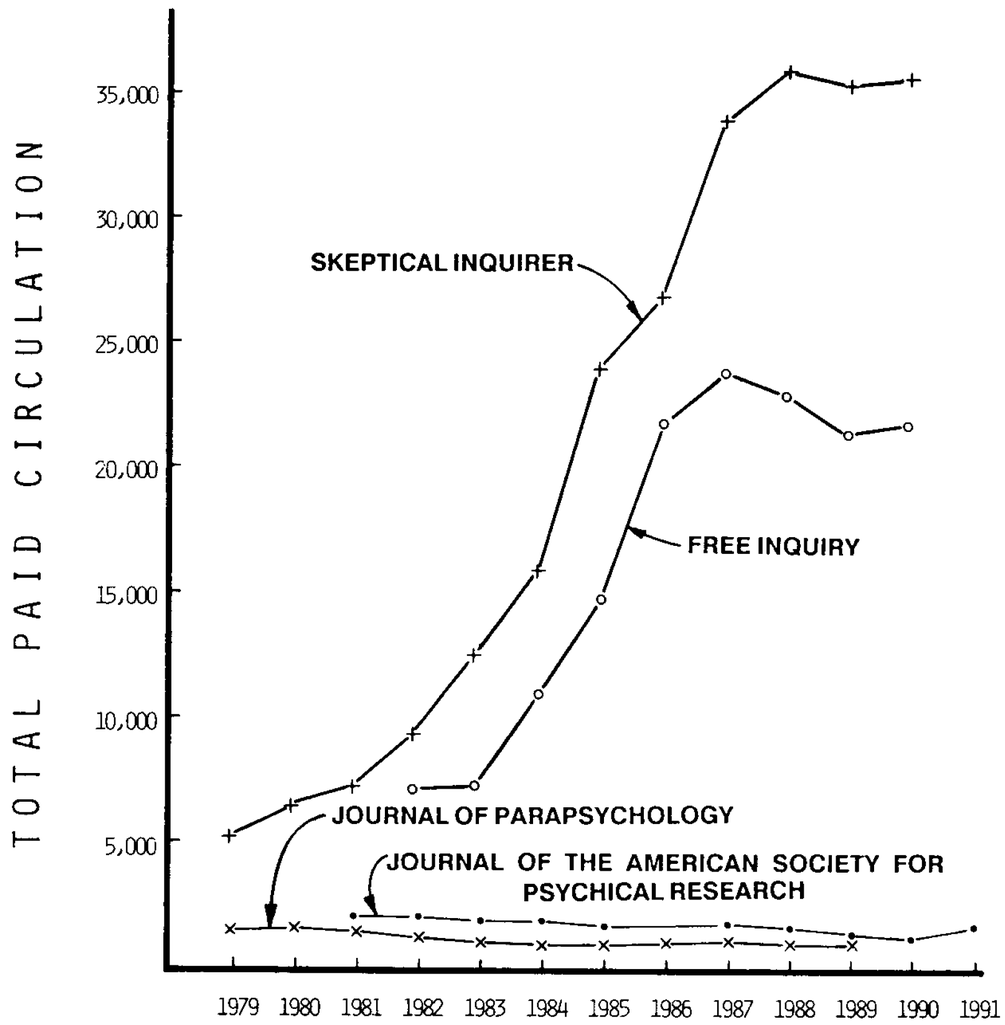

Fig. 1. Total Paid Circulation for *Skeptical Inquirer, Free Inquiry, Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research,* and *Journal of Parapsychology*

ureheads and increase the organization's visibility. A high priority has been given to the media, and CSICOP's style is geared for a broad audience rather than for practicing scientists who study the paranormal. In fact, after the first five years, CSICOP abandoned its own scientific research ("Policy on Sponsoring," 1982).

Because of its rapid growth and the nature of its subject matter, the organization has received considerable attention—some positive (e.g., Cornell, 1984; Hofstadter, 1982; Meyer, 1986; Otten, 1985; Schultz, 1986; Weisburd, 1991) and some neutral (Wallis, 1985; see also Kurtz, 1985a). But it is not surprising that the Committee has been involved in a number of heated controversies. These produced internal schisms and pro-

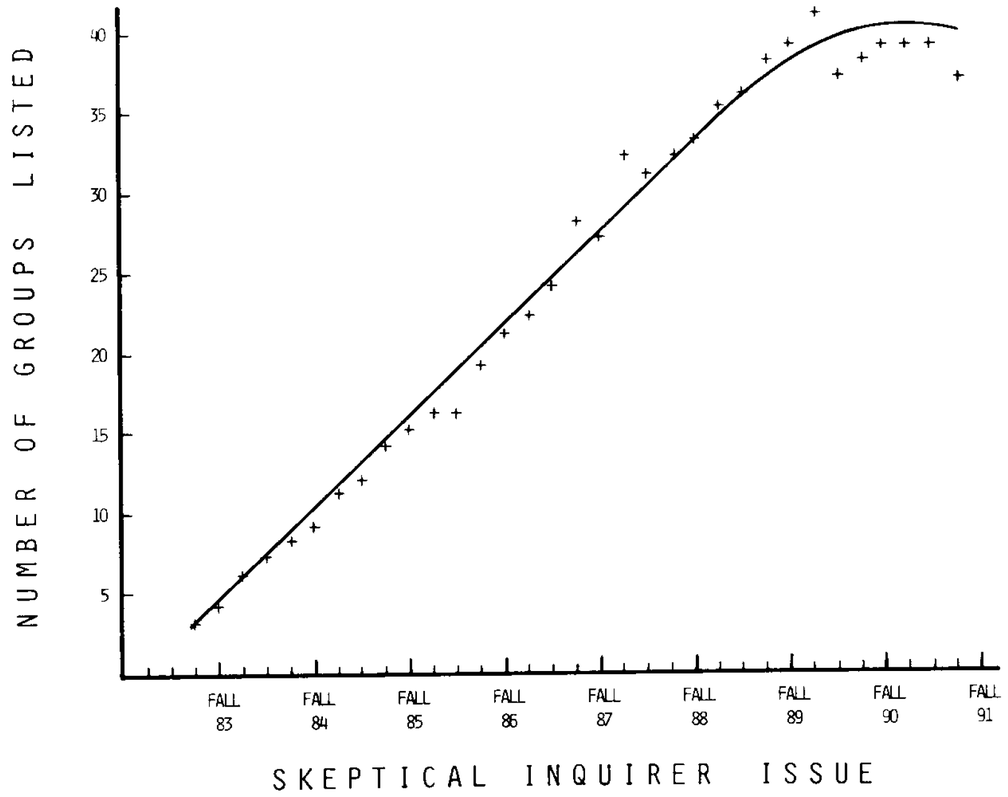

Fig. 2. Growth of Local Groups in the U.S. as Listed in the *Skeptical Inquirer* as Having Aims Similar to CSICOP

voked rebukes from outsiders. A few examples will give a flavor of some of the disputes. In examining the scientific status of CSICOP, sociologists Pinch and Collins (1984) described the Committee as a "scientific-vigilante" organization (p. 539). Commenting on an article in *SI,* medical professor Louis Lasagna (1984) wrote: "One can almost smell the fiery autos-da-fé of Torquemada and the Spanish Inquisition" (p. 12). Engineering professor Leonard Lewin (1979) noted that in *SI* articles "the rhetoric and appeal to emotion seemed rather out of place" (p. 9). Rockwell, Rockwell, and Rockwell (1978b) called CSICOP members "irrational rationalists" (see also Kurtz, 1978b; Rockwell, Rockwell, & Rockwell, 1978a). Sociologist Hans Sebald (1984) described contributors to *SI* as "combative propagandists" (p. 122). Adams (1987) compared CSICOP with the Cyclops; Robert Anton Wilson (1986) labeled CSICOP the "New Inquisition," and White (1979) called them "new disciples of scientism." McConnell (1987) wrote: "I cannot escape the conviction that those who control CSICOP are primarily bent upon the vilification of parapsychology and parapsychologists" (p. 191). Clearly, CSICOP has its share of detractors.

After an historical overview, I discuss factors that characterize CSICOP and its local affiliates, and I examine their rhetorical strategies and review

the major activities of the various groups. Coverage is limited to the rise of skepticism in the U.S., although CSICOP has established official sections of the Committee in foreign countries.

Historical Overview

CSICOP can be regarded as the first case of ongoing, organized debunking of the paranormal,[4] but there are some precursors. Prior to the organization of CSICOP, attacks on the paranormal have come largely from three groups: magicians, academic psychologists, and rationalists/atheists.[5] Magicians have been involved with controversies on the paranormal for over 400 years, and they have written numerous books on the topic (for an overview, see Hansen, in press). Academic psychologists critiqued early psychical research and parapsychology (for discussions, see Coon, in press; Mauskopf & McVaugh, 1980; Murchison, 1927; Pratt, Rhine, Smith, Stuart, & Greenwood, 1940; Prince, 1930). Rationalists and atheists have long been antagonistic to claims of miracles (see Keller & Keller, 1968/1969). They actively combatted spiritualistic phenomena and psychical research, but little has been written about their involvement with these controversies. Even the section on the paranormal in *The Encyclopedia of Unbelief* (Hyman, 1985) ignores this connection.

One of the most prolific detractors of early psychic research was Joseph McCabe, a Catholic priest who became an atheist (Stein, 1985). McCabe authored a number of attacks (e.g., Chesterton et al., 1914; McCabe, 1914, 1920a, 1920b; "Verbatim Report," 1920). Rationalists Clodd (1917), Mann (1919), and Whyte (1920) wrote similar books. Many of these were produced for the Rationalist Press Association (RPA) under the imprint of Watts & Co. Mercier's (1917) *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge* was also published under that imprint. The rationalists' attacks diminished somewhat after the second decade of this century, but their influence continued. In the 1930s, Corliss Lamont[6] (1932, 1935) and rationalist J. B. S. Haldane wrote on miracles and psychic phenomena (Lunn & Haldane, 1935).[7] These two individuals took a more moderate position

[4] There are groups that have scientifically investigated psychic claims, notably the Society for Psychical Research, founded in 1882, and the American Society for Psychical Research, founded in 1885. The Parapsychological Association, established in 1957, is an association of professional researchers and is affiliated with the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS).

[5] A fourth group, conservative Christians, have also attacked the paranormal (e.g., North, 1988; for an overview of some recent works, see Lewis, 1989). Though their literature is sizeable, it has had little impact on secular academic debates, but it should not be overlooked when considering the paranormal in larger social contexts.

[6] Lamont was made Honorary President of the American Humanist Association in 1974, shortly before it sponsored the formation of CSICOP.

[7] Haldane, Lamont, and McCabe were all promoters of the Stalinist U.S.S.R.

than the earlier writers and seemed to accept the reality of some psi events. The 1950s again produced sharper attacks. Joseph Rinn (1950), president of the Brooklyn Philosophical Association (a "free thought" group), wrote his scathing *Sixty Years of Psychical Research,* which was published by the Truth Seeker Company, a major "free thought" publisher. In 1953, Watts & Co. produced Antony Flew's *A New Approach to Psychical Research.* Two decades later, in 1975, the annual convention of the RPA was devoted to parapsychology ("Contents," 1975; "Science and the Paranormal," 1975), and their program listed C. E. M. Hansel, Antony Flew, Eric Dingwall, and Christopher Evans—all of whom soon became members of CSICOP. Today the tradition continues, and the *American Rationalist* frequently carries commentary critical of the paranormal.[8]

In the early 1970s, there was a tremendous upsurge of interest in the occult in the U.S. (see Dutch, 1986; Melton, Clark, & Kelly, 1990). This occult explosion was not viewed favorably by many, and some academics perceived it to signal a rise of irrationality. One group that shared an interest in the matter was Resources for the Scientific Evaluation of the Paranormal (RSEP). The members included Martin Gardner, Ray Hyman, James Randi, and Marcello Truzzi, all of whom were magicians ("New Association," 1975). At that time, Truzzi, also a sociologist, was publishing a privately circulated newsletter called the *Zetetic*. RSEP was barely organized and achieved little public notice but can be considered the immediate predecessor to CSICOP.

Shortly after the formation of RSEP, Paul Kurtz, independently of that group, orchestrated a campaign against astrology.[9] Signatures from 186 scientists were collected for a manifesto titled "Objections to Astrology" (1975). It was published in the *Humanist,* an obscure religious and philosophical magazine of the American Humanist Association (AHA) edited by Kurtz. According to an article by Kurtz (1977b), this manifesto "was sent to every newspaper in the United States and Canada" (p. 42). It was widely noticed and was discussed on the front page of the *New York Times* (Rensberger, 1975). The AHA held its 1976 annual convention on April 30 to May 2 with the theme "The Old and New Irrationalisms: Attacks on Science," and during that meeting CSICOP was formed ("American Humanist Association," 1976; Kurtz, 1976a, 1978a). It was initially sponsored by the *Humanist*. RSEP disbanded, and Truzzi, Gardner, Randi, and Hyman joined CSICOP, with Truzzi becoming cochair and editor of the *Zetetic,* it then being made the official organ of the Committee.

Truzzi was probably the most moderate of the original members of CSICOP, and under his editorship (two issues) the magazine contained

[8] The reader should not be left with the impression that only skeptics are associated with rationalist positions. Several psychical researchers have been allied with rationalism, atheism, and humanism.

[9] A couple years earlier, Kurtz garnered media attention by promoting his *Humanist Manifesto II* (1973; Martin, 1973).

diverse viewpoints. He desired a scholarly publication devoted to debate and dialogue, whereas others wanted a more aggressive, popular approach. The two sides readily admitted their differences (Wade, 1977b), and while Truzzi was editing the *Zetetic*, Kurtz was still running the *Humanist* and publishing vitriolic attacks on the paranormal by CSICOP members. In August 1977 Truzzi resigned as editor, and shortly thereafter he left the Committee and started a new publication called *Zetetic Scholar;* it was published irregularly for 11 issues, the last one appearing in 1987 (see Clark & Melton, 1979a, 1979b; Rensberger, 1978; Wade, 1977b). Kendrick Frazier was appointed editor of CSICOP's magazine; the name was changed to the *Skeptical Inquirer;* and it took on a more aggressive, debunking tone. Cartoons and illustrations were later added, some of which poked fun at persons discussed in the articles. Lee Nisbet, CSICOP's Executive Director, articulated the Committee's position for Nicholas Wade (1977a) of *Science,* saying: "It's [belief in the paranormal] a very dangerous phenomenon, dangerous to science, dangerous to the basic fabric of our society. . . . We feel it is the duty of the scientific community to show that these beliefs are utterly screwball" (p. 646).

One controversy, the Mars Effect debate, was perhaps especially instrumental in consolidating CSICOP's approach to the paranormal and the abandonment of its own scientific research. During the early days of the Committee, Kurtz and several others were engaged in a scientific study of astrology.[10] Dennis Rawlins, an astronomer and member of the Executive Council of CSICOP, conducted the detailed calculations and data analysis for the project. He began noticing severe problems: The results were supporting the case for an astrological influence of Mars on sports ability, much to the consternation of the investigators. Rawlins tried to bring this to the attention of other Committee members. This lead to a bitter dispute, with Rawlins charging that serious mistakes had been made and that Kurtz had undertaken a Watergate-style cover-up. Rawlins (1981) was forced out of CSICOP, and he published an exposé in *Fate*. There was no real answer to the charge of a cover-up, and much was published about it in *Zetetic Scholar*. The upshot was that several of the more moderate people resigned from the Committee. Rawlins's article appeared in the October 1981 issue of *Fate,* and that same month CSICOP instituted a policy of not conducting research itself ("Policy on Sponsoring," 1982).

After the moderate members left, little dissent or criticism of the Committee has been seen in the pages of *SI*. The magazine nearly always presents only one side of a controversy in its articles. Although *SI* sometimes publishes letters of complaint, full papers from CSICOP's critics

[10] Before the study, Kurtz (1975) had expressed strong opposition to astrology. In a lengthy editorial, he urged newspapers to label their astrology columns as follows: "*Warning: If taken seriously, this column may be dangerous to your health!*" (emphasis in original, p. 20). This suggests a strong bias in anticipated outcome of the research, a charge CSICOP members have made regarding proponents of the paranormal.

almost never appear. This is in remarkable contrast to refereed parapsychology journals and even some of the pro-paranormal magazines. For instance, the popularly written magazine *Fate* has carried full articles by CSICOP members Susan Blackmore, L. Sprague de Camp, Kendrick Frazier, Martin Gardner, Philip Klass, Larry Kusche, Lawrence Jerome, David Marks, Joe Nickell, James Oberg, Dennis Rawlins, Robert Sheaffer, Gordon Stein, and Marcello Truzzi. In keeping with CSICOP's one-sided approach, *SI* has given scant attention to papers in well-known, orthodox scientific journals that present evidence for psi (e.g., Child, 1985; Jahn, 1982; Radin & Nelson, 1989; Rao & Palmer, 1987; Winkelman, 1982).

Another major development in the skeptics' movement occurred in the early 1980s with the formation of local groups. The first was founded in Austin, Texas in the fall of 1981 by several persons affiliated with the University of Texas (McFadden, 1981). The first approved local chapter was the Bay Area Skeptics, which was organized in June 1982 (Frazier, 1982). Groups in other parts of the country soon followed, and in the last nine years the growth has been dramatic (see Figure 2). Some of these organizations have hundreds of members.

Characteristics of CSICOP's Membership

There are four major features that characterize CSICOP, affect its choice of goals, and determine its spheres of influence. Perhaps the single most important factor is the high educational level of the membership; many hold prominent positions within academia. Another aspect is that a disproportionate number of members are magicians, and many of them were involved with parapsychological controversies long before the establishment of the Committee. A third distinguishing feature is that the vast majority in CSICOP are male, and this has affected the tone and demeanor of the group. A final characteristic is the influence of religious convictions; a substantial portion of the members share similar views and are active in promoting them.

Education

The most salient feature of the Committee is the academic status of many of its members. Their scholarly prestige gives the organization its visibility, power, and legitimacy in the eyes of important segments of society. CSICOP has actively recruited people such as Murray Gell-Mann (Nobel laureate in physics), F. H. C. Crick (Nobel prize for physiology and medicine), Carl Sagan, Stephen Jay Gould, and the late B. F. Skinner. A large percentage of the membership is involved in scholarly pursuits. The inside front cover of the Summer 1990 issue of *SI* shows that 28 of the 56 Fellows list college or university affiliations; the remainder are mostly

writers and scientists. Of the 56 Scientific and Technical Consultants, 32 give college or university affiliations.

Leaders of the local groups frequently come from the academic community. The lists of affiliates in back issues of *SI* show that a number of the chairpersons have been based in university departments (often in psychology). These groups have sought support (and thus prestige) from academics. According to their letterhead, the Southern California Skeptics (SCS) had 13 of 18 board members and technical advisors who held Ph.D. degrees. In fact, the SCS was granted affiliation with the Pacific Division of the American Association for the Advancement of Science ("Corrections to Last Laser," 1986; SCS Becomes Affiliated," 1986). Four of five members of the core committee of the Sacramento Skeptics Society held doctoral degrees (Sandbeck, 1987). The May 1985 issue of the *Northwest Skeptic* listed 27 consultants for that group, 18 of whom gave academic affiliations. Thirteen of 19 advisors of the Bay Area Skeptics held doctoral degrees ("Advisors," 1986), as did 5 of 6 Advisors and Supporters of Hawaii Skeptics, according to their press release of June 11, 1985.

The highly educated provide a large source of CSICOP's constituency. In the last 30 years, higher education has been a major growth industry; the number of Ph.D.'s awarded in 1975 was more than three times that of 1960 (*A Century of Doctorates,* 1978). In the process of pursuing advanced degrees, graduate students become familiar with the world views of those prominent in academia. When such prestigious people lend their names to an antiparanormal crusade, a student might automatically presume that those persons are scientific authorities on the topic. The result is a sizeable number who look to the Committee for expert opinion on the paranormal. In fact, CSICOP conducted a survey of its readership and found that 83% have some type of college degree, 54% have some type of advanced degree, and 27% hold a doctoral degree (personal communication from Barry Karr, August 19, 1991). These are impressive figures, and the relatively recent rapid growth of academe may help explain why organized debunking has been able to flourish now rather than in earlier times.

The prominence of the membership gives the Committee a number of benefits. It allows CSICOP's voice to be heard in academic debates on the paranormal. The National Research Council report on parapsychology is an example (for a discussion, see Palmer, Honorton, & Utts, 1989). Nonmember academics are likely to consider CSICOP's views when refereeing papers, evaluating grant proposals, and counseling students. It seems virtually certain that CSICOP will have a long-term impact on all in the academic world who become involved with parapsychology. CSICOP's views are likely to be influential when it comes to deciding how, and to what extent, the paranormal will be scientifically investigated within academia.

Magicians

The proportion of magicians in CSICOP is much higher than in the general population, and the magic fraternity has provided another constituency for the Committee. Kendrick Frazier (1984) noted that the first international CSICOP conference was attended by scores of amateur and professional magicians. The publishing house Prometheus Books, which produces skeptical works, is one of the few nonmagic vendors to advertise in conjuring magazines.

As can be seen in Table 1, 13 official members of CSICOP are or have been magicians. A number of these people have achieved some eminence within the conjuring fraternity. Martin Gardner began contributing to magic magazines more than 50 years ago (Matrix, 1979) and is an authority on impromptu close-up magic (Waters, 1988). Randi has been professionally involved with magic since he was 18 and seems to be the person most publicly identified with CSICOP. Ray Hyman was featured on the cover of the October 1986 issue of *Linking Ring,* the largest circulation magic magazine in the world. All three of these serve on the Executive Council of the Committee. Some of those who are no longer members of CSICOP are also well known within magic societies. Truzzi served as vice-president of Psychic Entertainers Association. Persi Diaconis is considered one of the top six card manipulators today (Waters, 1988). The late Milbourne Christopher was one of the most eminent historians of magic, and the late Eric Dingwall was the oldest living member of the Magic Circle. All of the above mentioned conjurors were involved with psychic topics long before the beginning of CSICOP, and the established social contacts within magic circles were very important in the formation of the Committee.

Social networks within conjuring also facilitated the founding of the local groups, and these organizations too have a substantial number of magicians. Robert Steiner, former chair of the Bay Area Skeptics (BAS), has been president of the Society of American Magicians (SAM) as well as chair of the SAM occult investigations committee. Robertson (1984) noted

Table 1

MAGICIANS WHO ARE OR HAVE BEEN OFFICIAL MEMBERS OF CSICOP

Richard Busch
Shawn Carlson
Milbourne Christopher*†
Persi Diaconis*†
Eric Dingwall*
Martin Gardner*†
Henry Gordon*
Ray Hyman*
Joe Nickell
Mark Plummer
James Randi*†
Robert Steiner*
Marcello Truzzi*

* Indicates sufficiently known to be included in *Who's Who in Magic* (Whaley, 1990).

† Indicates sufficient prominence to be included in *The Encyclopedia of Magic and Magicians* (Waters, 1988).

that magic tricks were displayed by a number of people at the founding party of BAS. David Alexander was a board member of Southern California Skeptics (SCS) as well as a professional magician; he is now editor of the *Humanist*. Richard Busch, chair of the Paranormal Investigating Committee of Pittsburgh, is a magician, as is Jamy Ian Swiss, a cofounder of the National Capital Area Skeptics. All five members of the core committee of Sacramento Skeptics Society have performed magic (Sandbeck, 1987; "Magic, Mysteries, and Mirth," 1987).

The high visibility of conjurors in CSICOP has given many people the idea that most magicians hold skeptical views regarding psychic phenomena. Surprisingly, this impression is not correct. Birdsell (1989) polled a group of magicians in California and found that 82% had a belief in ESP, and Truzzi (1983) cited a German poll of conjurors that revealed that 72.3% believed psi was probably real. Many prominent magicians have, in fact, endorsed psychic phenomena (Hansen, 1990a, 1990b).

The Predominance of Men and Its Effects

CSICOP is heavily dominated by men, and until 1991 there were no women at all on the Executive Council. A reporter for *New Scientist* described CSICOP as "white," "male," and "slightly geriatric" (Anderson, 1987, p. 51). The inside covers of recent issues of *SI* display the gender imbalance; the results are summarized in Table 2. The predominance of men characterizes the local affiliates as well. Of the 40 listed local leaders, only two are women.

Certainly academia is predominantly male, and so it is not surprising that a majority of CSICOP's members are men. However, the percentage does seem disproportionate.

Not all the local groups are totally dominated by men, and a CSICOP manual prepared for local groups encouraged the involvement of women. The East Bay Skeptics in California reported that 27% of its members were women ("Members Elect First Board," 1988), and in a 1990 election of the National Capital Area Skeptics, 3 of 11 listed candidates were women. Despite these efforts, the debunking movement is overwhelmingly run by men.

The perceived demeanor. Some have perceived the gender imbalance as

Table 2

DISTRIBUTION OF MEN AND WOMEN IN SKEPTICS' GROUPS

	Fellows	Scientific and Technical Consultants	Leaders of Local Groups
Men	53	52	38
Women	3	4	2

Figures based on pages 447–448 and the inside covers of the Summer 1990 issue of the *Skeptical Inquirer*.

influencing the demeanor of CSICOP, the *Skeptical Inquirer*, and the local affiliates. A few have even suggested that some debunkers project an insecure and macho attitude. Commenting on the 1985 CSICOP convention in California, Auerbach (1985) wrote:

> I felt an air of insecurity in the audience, and some of the presenters. It was very strange to be in an audience that laughed at the mere mention of the names of a few of the better-known parapsychologists, listening to presenters who seemed to enjoy that reaction, and even encourage it. (p. 10)

Michael Swords (1986) painted a similar picture of the 1986 conference.

Such perceptions are not limited to outsiders. This has been an issue within CSICOP as well. In the March 1985 newsletter of the Bay Area Skeptics, Mary Coulman (1985) wrote a piece titled "Where Are the Women?" She reported that sometimes she was the only woman who attended meetings of the Bay Area Skeptics and that often there were only 2 or 3 women present with 60 to 70 men. Coulman wrote another column in the June issue asking the same question, noting that no women had yet replied. Finally, months later, Elissa Pratt-Lowe (1985) responded:

> I think another aspect of organized skepticism that may deter women is the aggressive, "macho" attitudes held by some of the (male) participants. It seems to me that some "skeptics" are more interested in ridicule than in exploring and challenging pseudoscientific beliefs. [This was followed by "*Very true, I think.—MC*"]. (p. 7)

The Bay Area Skeptics are not the only ones to confront the problem. In response to an article by physicist George Lawrence in *Rocky Mountain Skeptic*, John Wilder (1988) wrote: "For all of the author's [Lawrence's] scientific, academic and intellectual credentials, he displays a level of disrespect for others that, in my opinion, is completely inappropriate. . . . The author succeeded only in subjecting a group of sincere . . . people to outright ridicule" (p. 8).

One of the most extreme cases was that of Drew Endacott. He undertook to form a local affiliate in the Philadelphia area and sent out letters saying, "I am forming such an organization with CSICOP's backing, and I want people who are willing to get dirty. . . . What we will do is employ a very thorough, proven technique for getting the point across to people who have no demonstrated facility to reason" (copy of letter in possession of author). Once Kurtz was alerted to this, he disavowed affiliation with Endacott and forbade him to use CSICOP's name. Endacott was not a lone crackpot however, but a charter member of the Austin Society to Oppose Pseudoscience (ASTOP), and before trying to start his own chapter in Philadelphia, he consulted with ASTOP as well as with Richard Busch, chair of the Paranormal Investigating Committee of Pittsburgh ("Elsewhere in Philly," 1985). Certainly the vast majority of members of local affiliates are not this radical. However, these groups do attract persons with extreme views, and a number are active within the local societies.

A few individuals in the national organization have expressed concern about the image projected by the local affiliates. Ray Hyman has been quoted as speaking of a "frightening" "fundamentalism" and "witch-hunting" when discussing the rise of the popular debunking movement (Clark, 1987). Hyman has also been quoted as saying: "As a whole, parapsychologists are nice, honest people, while the critics are cynical, nasty people" (McBeath & Thalbourne, 1985, p. 3). Hyman (1987) wrote an article advising the local groups how to be effective critics; this was published in *Skeptical Briefs* and reprinted in a number of newsletters. He suggested using "the principle of charity," saying "*I know that many of my fellow critics will find this principle to be unpalatable*" (p. 5, italics added).

The problems caused by cynicism and hostility have been recognized by the organization, and steps are being taken to diminish them. The severity of the problem cannot be attributed entirely to male dominance; after all, a number of other predominantly male organizations do not have such a reputation. It is likely that there are a number of other factors that contribute to the perceived demeanor.

Religious and Philosophical Factors

Several organized and informal religious channels (primarily atheistic[11]) link many CSICOP Fellows, consultants, and members of local groups. Although CSICOP members cannot be said to hold a unified religious view, considerable religious influence is visible. This is apparent in the writings of leading spokespersons such as James Alcock, Martin Gardner, and Paul Kurtz—all members of the Executive Council. See Table 3 for a list of members who have *publicly* identified themselves as holding atheistic or at least nontheistic views.

Paul Kurtz, Chairman of CSICOP and a philosopher at the State University of New York at Buffalo,[12] is active in promulgating atheism. He is president of Promethesus Books (Berkley, 1987), which publishes such titles as *The Atheist Debater's Handbook* and *Atheism: The Case Against God*. Kurtz was formerly editor of the *Humanist*, is now editor of the magazine *Free Inquiry* (*FI*), and has been positioning himself as a leading spokesperson for secular humanism (Bartlett, 1987). Kurtz's views on the paranormal are firmly linked to his views on religion.[13] The title of his book, *The Transcendental Temptation: A Critique of Religion and the Paranormal* (Kurtz, 1986), speaks for itself (for a review, see Stokes, 1987).

James Alcock has made several attempts to associate parapsychology with religion in order to discredit it as a science. One of his concerted attempts was published in *Free Inquiry* and was entitled "Parapsychology: The 'Spiritual' Science" (Alcock, 1985). Alcock's feelings toward religion were candidly revealed in his 1981 book, *Parapsychology: Science or Magic?*, where he asserted:

> In the name of religion human beings have committed genocide, toppled thrones, built gargantuan shrines, practiced ritual murder, forced others to conform to their way of life, eschewed the pleasures of the flesh, flagellated themselves, or given away all their possessions and become martyrs. (p. 7)

[11] Atheism may or may not be considered a religion. However, atheism is clearly a religious *position* or religious *view*.

[12] Kurtz retired from the university in 1991 (personal communication from Paul Kurtz, August 14, 1991).

[13] Kurtz's definition of religion seems rather broad. For instance, he denounced the movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, calling it a "sequel to *The Ten Commandments, Ben Hur*, and other religious extravaganzas" (Kurtz, 1978c, p. 4), and he went on to decry the religious symbolism in it.

Table 3

MEMBERS OF CSICOP WHO HAVE *PUBLICLY* IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES AS HOLDING NONTHEISTIC OR ATHEISTIC VIEWS

CSICOP Member	Source of Information
George Abell	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
Isaac Asimov	*Free Inquiry*, Spring 1982, p. 9
Brand Blanshard	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
Vern Bullough	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
Mario Bunge	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
Bette Chambers	*Humanist*, September/October 1973, p. 9*
Francis Crick	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
Jean Dommanget	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
Paul Edwards	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
Antony Flew	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
Yves Galifret	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
Murray Gell-Mann	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
Stephen Jay Gould	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
Sidney Hook	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
Marvin Kohl	*Humanist*, November/December 1973, p. 5*
Paul Kurtz	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
Gerald A. Larue	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
Paul MacCready	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
Ernest Nagel	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
John W. Patterson	*American Atheist*, May 1983, p. 12–14
Mark Plummer	*American Atheist*, June 1983, p. 29–33
W. V. Quine	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
James Randi	*Who's Who In America* (1990, p. 2683)
Carl Sagan	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 59†
Al Seckel	*Free Inquiry*, Summer 1986, p. 54
B. F. Skinner	*Humanist*, September/October 1973, p. 9*
Gordon Stein	*Free Inquiry*, Fall 1988, p. 48–50
Robert Steiner	Robertson (1984)
Marvin Zimmerman	*Humanist*, September/October 1973, p. 9*

† See "The Academy of Humanism" (1983) for statement on nontheistic beliefs.
* See "Humanist Manifesto II" (1973), p. 5, for statement on nontheistic beliefs.

Positive attributes of religion were not acknowledged, and these feelings may help explain Alcock's frequent criticisms of psi research. For on the same page he wrote: "An examination of the origins and functions of religion . . . is a useful starting-point for the study of modern parapsychology."

A former member of the Executive Council wrote on religion in *SI* as follows:

> One is continually encountering priests who express dismay and perplexity at their flock's attraction for the other, competing superstitions. . . . Give a fellow the tools for destroying his common sense, and occasionally he'll finish the job. . . . Religion is the optimist's paranoia. (Rawlins, 1977, p. 65)

Martin Gardner also acknowledged the influence of his religious beliefs, and he revealed that he once was a Protestant fundamentalist (Barcellos, 1979; Morris, 1982). Apparently his opposition to parapsychology is based in part on religious factors, for he has written:

> It is possible that paranormal forces not yet established may allow prayers to influence the material world, and I certainly am not saying this possibility should be ruled out. . . . As for empirical tests of the power of God to answer prayer, I am among those theists who, in the spirit of Jesus' remark that only the faithless look for signs, consider such tests both futile and blasphemous. . . . Let us not tempt God. (Gardner, 1983b, p. 239)

Such attitudes help explain why Gardner has derided the religious views of professional researchers in parapsychology in order to besmirch their reputations as scientists (e.g., Gardner, 1981, pp. 320–321). Recently, Gardner (1991) argued that electronics writer Forrest Mims was rightfully denied a position as a columnist for *Scientific American* because Mims was an evangelical Christian creationist, even though *Scientific American* admitted that Mims was otherwise well qualified and that his writings would have had nothing to do with evolution (see "Science's Litmus Test," 1991).[14] Gardner asserted that Mims' personal beliefs would have embarrassed the magazine, and that alone was sufficient reason to reject Mims. One can only conclude that issues of religious belief are important in the life of Martin Gardner.

Organizational links. Kurtz's magazine *Free Inquiry* provides connections between humanists and skeptics' groups. But Kurtz is not the only one in CSICOP who is involved with *Free Inquiry;* there is actually considerable overlap. Four of the five associate editors of *Free Inquiry* are listed in *Skeptical Inquirer* as having some affiliation with CSICOP. The

[14] Gerald Piel, former president of the AAAS and editor of *Scientific American,* made the decision against Mims. Shortly thereafter, Piel gave the keynote address at CSICOP's 1990 convention and received the Committee's "In Praise of Reason Award" (Shore, 1990.

editor, senior editors, and at least four contributing editors of *Free Inquiry* are associated with the Committee. (This overlap can be seen by comparing the Summer 1989 issues of *FI* and *SI.*) The magazines have shared office space since 1980. In October of 1990 this became more well known because CSICOP sent out a flyer announcing a new building (5,700 square feet) to house CSICOP, *SI, FI,* and the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism (CODESH) (Kurtz is also Chair of CODESH). According to the Spring 1991 issue of *SI,* $333,000 of the needed $420,000 had been raised. Also announced was a campaign to raise another $1,500,000 for a 24,000-square-foot building.

A subscription to *Free Inquiry* also brings the *Secular Humanist Bulletin,* a newsletter published by the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism. Issues have been devoted largely to short articles and notes on Christian Fundamentalism and Roman Catholicism. It is probably no accident that both Fundamentalists and Catholics have a belief in miracles (which can be interpreted as paranormal phenomena), and reports of miracles come in for derisive comment. *Free Inquiry* is active in promoting secular humanist centers, and these have been described specifically as resembling local affiliates of CSICOP (Flynn, 1986/87). The Summer 1989 issue of *FI* listed 19 such groups in the U.S. Tim Madigan, cofounder of Catholics Anonymous and Executive Editor of *FI,* has organized a secular humanist group as well as a skeptics' group.

The Rationalist Press Association in England has waged a long battle against religious beliefs. Its Honorary Associates have included CSICOP members Francis Crick, Eric Dingwall, Paul Edwards, Antony Flew, Paul Kurtz, Ernest Nagel, and B. F. Skinner. Flew and Kurtz have served as vice-presidents of the RPA. The RPA shares some of the characteristics of CSICOP. A survey of the readership of its magazine *New Humanist* found that 36% are over age 70, and 80% are over 50. Only 11% are women ("*New Humanist* Readership," 1990).

Another linkage of CSICOP members is the Academy of Humanism. This was formed in 1983 with maximum enrollment limited to 60, and all members can be considered eminent. The members are described as "nontheistic" (Academy of Humanism," 1983). Kurtz was largely responsible for the founding of the Academy, and he serves in its secretariat. The announcement of the Academy's formation decries paranormal beliefs. Indeed, of the 57 names listed as members of the Academy (inside back cover of the Spring 1989 issue of *FI*), 18 are or have been affiliated with CSICOP.

In 1985, the Academy announced the formation of the Committee for Scientific Examination of Religion (CSER). This committee purports to be "the first effective body of scientific scholars to evaluate these claims in the light of scientific inquiry" ("Scientists Form New Committee," 1985). The style and format of articles produced by members of this committee, and articles in *FI* generally, are similar to those in the *American Atheist,* the publication of Madalyn O'Hair (e.g., "Yahweh: A Mor-

ally Retarded God'' [Harwood, 1986]; ''Is Religiosity Pathological?'' [Ellis, 1988]). The articles are in striking contrast to the scholarly papers in the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* and the *Review of Religious Research;* both have been in existence for more than 30 years. Some of the classified advertisements give a flavor of *FI* (e.g., ''Devastating Bible Critique,'' ''Jesus Never Existed,'' ''Jehovah's Witnesses Hilariously Exposed''). Personal ads have been accepted, as well as those for an apparently untested AIDS remedy and for cryogenic immortality (see *FI,* Winter 1986/87, p. 63). Seven of 20 CSER members are affiliated with CSICOP, and Randi is the principal investigator of one of the subcommittees (see back cover of Winter 1986/87 issue of *FI*).

Local groups. As in the parent organization, members of local affiliates have mixed views on religion. However, it is clear that religious assumptions and previously held but now-rejected beliefs are strong influences. As with CSICOP, religious networks link members of the local groups.

The local organizations not infrequently promote secular humanism and mention it in their literature. The Sacramento Skeptics even rescheduled their meetings to avoid a conflict with the Sacramento Humanists (''Special Note,'' 1988). The newsletter of the National Capital Area Skeptics reported on the Tenth Humanist World Congress in Buffalo in 1988. That congress held a special lunch for *SI* subscribers, and a tour was offered of CSICOP's headquarters (Inglis, 1988a).

Both Al Seckel, executive director of the Southern California Skeptics, and Robert Steiner, former chair of the Bay Area Skeptics, have been involved with a subcommittee of CSER. Steiner describes himself as a ''militant atheist'' (Robertson, 1984) and even published an article denouncing Santa Claus in *American Atheist* (Steiner, 1982). Seckel has contributed to publications of Atheists United and to the *American Atheist.* Rick Rickards (1986) of the Cleveland skeptics' group described religion as being ''only a variation on the same theme [as pseudoscience]'' (p. [3]).

A number of members apparently once held strong religious or paranormal beliefs but later became disillusioned. Béla Scheiber (1986), president of an affiliate in Colorado, described his views on flying saucers: ''In fact you could say I was a believer'' and went on to refer to his ''youthful longing for something to believe in'' (p. 2). Robert Sheaffer, a former chairperson of the Bay Area Skeptics, admitted to previously believing in flying saucers (Robertson, 1984). John Hill (1986), editor of *Rocky Mountain Skeptic,* wrote of his attendance at a scientific creationism seminar: ''It was fun in a way, but too much like being thrust back into my adolescence'' (p. 4). Richard Brenneman, former editor of the newsletter of the Sacramento group, admitted to having been an astrologer (Sandbeck, 1987).

Psychological and social consequences. Skeptics sometimes speak derisively of an emotional ''need to believe.'' If this need is a typical part of the human condition, skeptics are unlikely to escape its influence, even if they deny it. In fact, in a work published by Prometheus Books, skeptic

John Schumaker (1990) explores the detrimental psychological consequences of being skeptical of religion and the paranormal. He frankly acknowledges that skeptics can have difficulty adjusting to society and are susceptible to certain mental disorders.

There are striking parallels in the advertisements for membership for both skeptics' groups and atheistic-secular humanist organizations. Both appeal to the feeling of isolation in an ''irrational'' culture. The first issue of the National Capital Area Skeptics' newsletter asked: ''Do you sometimes feel that, as a skeptic, you are all but isolated in a sea of credulity? . . . we are eager to have you join us'' (p. 3).

The feelings of loneliness and isolation are quite real, and there seem to be reasons for them. Individuals in both groups sometimes display disdain for others. This is exemplified in the widely publicized comment made at a humanist convention by Ted Turner, who called Christianity ''a religion for losers'' (''Turner Sorry,'' 1990). I have encountered these attitudes among atheists and secular humanists. Some describe religious believers as ''weak'' or ''unwilling to face reality.'' Similar opinions are expressed by debunkers. Given such beliefs, it is no surprise that some skeptics feel alone and isolated. Certainly not all of them hold such attitudes, and some have even expressed dismay at the behavior of fellow debunkers.

Although religious issues seem to be quite salient in the lives of many skeptics, not all are so involved. Yet as shown in Table 3, 29 official members of CSICOP have *publicly* identified themselves as holding nontheistic or atheistic beliefs. This is a remarkable number, and it has clearly influenced the organization. Much of the energy driving the controversy over the paranormal may derive from deeply held religious beliefs, and any attempt to understand the psychological factors underlying the psi controversy should consider religious issues.

Formal Organization of the Movement

The structure of CSICOP influences its goals and activities. Here I briefly outline the formal organization of the Committee and its changing relationship with the local groups. It is crucial to understand the backgrounds of a few key personalities because they largely determine priorities. As will be described, the power in CSICOP is concentrated in a very small number of individuals, the vast majority have no vote, and few policy makers are scientists.

Official Structure of CSICOP

The ''By Laws of CSICOP, Inc.'' (undated) state that ''the Executive Council of the Committee shall have voting power with respect to formu-

lating the policies of the Committee'' (p. 2).[15] The even smaller Board of Directors[16] is vested with the financial and administrative power, with the Chair (Kurtz) given primary authority. The ''Fellows'' of the Committee and the ''Scientific and Technical Consultants'' (who are the only other official members of CSICOP) are without vote. Thus, all of the most eminent members play virtually no role in decisions; their names simply lend status to the organization. The precise number of members of the Committee is unclear because the membership rosters in *SI* are preceded with the words ''partial list,'' but Paul Kurtz told me that there were few if any additional members (personal communication from Paul Kurtz, August 14, 1991).[17]

Although many Fellows and Consultants are scientists, few of the policy makers are. In fact, only one member of the Board of Directors is a scientist (Alcock); the others are philosophers and editors. Thus, nonscientific leadership controls CSICOP, and as I explain, this is reflected in the activities of the organization.

CSICOP employs approximately six full-time and six part-time people (personal communication from Barry Karr, August 14, 1991). These personnel produce and edit the newsletter and magazine, respond to inquiries, raise funds, and organize conferences. Some of the employees are also associated with the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism.

Key Personalities

The dynamism and vitality of the group can be attributed to a small number of key individuals committed to similar goals. The three most influential have been Paul Kurtz, James Randi, and Martin Gardner. Although I have mentioned them before, some additional background information may help explain their roles.

Paul Kurtz. Paul Kurtz is chairman and cofounder of the Committee and widely regarded as its driving force (Gordon, 1987, p. 213). It was he who arranged financial support to begin the organization. Although Kurtz taught philosophy, he might be described more accurately as a ''business-

[15] As of March 1991, the Executive Council included James Alcock, Barry Beyerstein, Kendrick Frazier, Martin Gardner, Ray Hyman, Philip Klass, Paul Kurtz, Joe Nickell, Lee Nisbet, and James Randi (personal communication from Barry Karr, March 12, 1991). In May 1991, James Randi resigned because of legal problems, and Susan Blackmore became a member shortly before that. Blackmore's role on the Executive Council will not be considered in this paper because she has not served long enough to substantially influence policy; of course, Randi's contribution will be discussed.

[16] The Board of Directors consists of Alcock, Frazier, Kurtz, and Nisbet.

[17] The Summer 1991 issue of *SI* listed 55 Fellows and 58 Consultants (113 official members). The same day I interviewed Kurtz, Barry Karr, CSICOP Executive Director, told me that CSICOP had about 200 members. This directly contradicted Kurtz. I was told that a full list of members was not available.

person–missionary.'' Kurtz is president of Prometheus Books, which he founded in 1970 (Berkley, 1978). This publishing house is the primary purveyor of antiparanormal books in this country, and its financial success has been aided by the growth of the debunking movement. The press has a reported average annual growth of 25% (Berkley, 1987). Kurtz is also a copresident of the International Humanist and Ethical Union (a coalition of humanist and atheist organizations). Although Kurtz has shown exceptional dynamism and success as a businessperson and as a missionary for secular humanism, his position as a philosopher seems a bit less impressive. His *Exuberance: An Affirmative Philosophy of Life* (1977/1985b) is something of a ''positive thinking'' book for humanists, and a recent review compared the level of his writing with that of Shirley MacLaine (Stillings, 1989).

James Randi. Randi has been professionally involved with magic since he was 18, and he has received moderate acclaim within that fraternity. He was featured on the cover of *Hocus Pocus* (April/June, 1980) and *Tannen's Magic Manuscript* (January/February, 1986). Randi has long been involved with the paranormal; in fact, his entry in *Current Biography* (Moritz, 1988) tells how he publicly confronted phoney spiritualists when he was a teenager. He has since enjoyed a colorful career; at one time, Randi published a phoney astrology column (Moritz, 1988); had a radio show of his own (Moseley, 1965a); was an escape artist (Nicolson, 1974); toured with rock star Alice Cooper, playing the role of executioner on stage (Greene, 1986); and took part in ''archaeological exploits'' in South America with UFO buff James Moseley (1965b), who has admitted to grave-robbing (Pattison, 1991). Randi is now the individual probably most widely identified with the skeptics' movement. His magic experience helped generate considerable publicity; he has appeared on Johnny Carson's *Tonight* show at least 32 times (Jaroff, 1988). Randi's association with CSICOP resulted in his receiving several major honors. The MacArthur Foundation gave him a ''genius'' award, which carried a tax-free grant of $272,000 (Holden, 1986). In 1989, the American Physical Society presented him with its Forum Award for ''Promoting Public Understanding of the Relation of Physics to Society'' (''We Hear That,'' 1989).

Like many others in CSICOP, Randi has described himself as an atheist. He associates with like-minded groups and has made appearances at conventions of the Freedom From Religion Foundation. In 1990, he received a Humanist Distinguished Service Award, and the American Humanist Association sells both audio and video tapes titled ''Honoring the Amazing Randi.''

Martin Gardner. Martin Gardner has been aptly described as the ''godfather of the movement'' (Clark, 1990, p. 420); his influence is pervasive. As mentioned previously, he is highly regarded in conjuring circles and has contributed important works to magic (Booth, 1988). In 1952, he published *In the Name of Science*, which has turned out to be a landmark skeptical work. The volume established Gardner as an early prominent

debunker. The book took a popular rather than scholarly approach, and it contained no footnotes or list of references. It displayed a snide and sarcastic demeanor, setting the tone for many future debunkers. Gardner's book was later revised and is still in print under the title *Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science* (Gardner, 1957). The temper of his writing attracted the attention of a *Newsweek* writer who noted: "Gentle as he is, he is driven almost beyond satire . . . he wields Ockham's razor like a switchblade" (Adler with Carey, 1981, p. 101). Despite his style, Gardner is no intellectual lightweight; for example, his *The Whys of a Philosophical Scrivener* (1983b) is much more sophisticated than a number of Kurtz's recent books.

Gardner is primarily a writer and shuns public appearances; he has never made a presentation at a CSICOP convention. His entry in *Contemporary Authors* (Locher, 1978) lists 41 authored and edited works; many more have been published since. His skeptical influence has been felt in the publishing world beyond his own writings. Hansel (1966, p. v) specifically thanked Gardner for helping to assure publication of his *ESP: A Scientific Evaluation*. Gardner also makes a point of talking with editors and publishers and informing them as to what can be considered as "acceptable" science (e.g., Gardner, 1981, p. 346).

Gardner probably received his greatest fame through his mathematical games column in *Scientific American*. This series ran from 1957 to 1982. I grew up reading his column, and I suspect that a substantial portion of today's physical scientists and engineers did too. Near the time of his retirement, a number of magazines carried articles on his career (e.g., Adler with Carey, 1981; Morris, 1982; Rucker, 1981), and Volume 22 of the *Journal of Recreational Mathematics* was dedicated to him (Madachy, 1990). These tributes attest to his wide influence.

All three of these key individuals have a financial stake in the debunking movement. Prometheus Books publishes numerous skeptical titles, and Kurtz is president—a fact rarely acknowledged in the pages of *SI*. Randi obtains speaking and performing engagements through local skeptics' groups. Gardner has published a number of books via Kurtz's publishing house and is one of its most prolific authors. Writers in *SI* sometimes complain about the financial self-interest of those promoting the paranormal; however, such comments are seldom directed at those within their own ranks.

Local Groups

The relationship of CSICOP and the local groups has varied over the years, but the first officially "approved local chapter" was the Bay Area Skeptics, which began in 1982 (Frazier, 1982). Other chapters soon followed, and their growth has been impressive. The Committee has taken an active role in fostering these societies; CSICOP has loaned money for such purposes, and in one undertaking, the Executive Director was sent on a

two-month world tour to help establish debunking organizations (Anderson, 1987). CSICOP published the newsletter *Skeptical Briefs* (*SB*) in order to facilitate communication with the groups as well as a handbook describing how to organize and manage them. At CSICOP conferences, there have been sessions devoted to representatives from the local affiliates, and at one time CSICOP employed a "Group Coordinator."

The local affiliates have posed some difficulties for the Committee. A few members have been extremely aggressive, and some of their attacks have provoked lawsuits. With the rising legal problems, CSICOP became concerned about the groups, and in their listing in the Spring 1987 *SI*, they began to describe them as "independent and autonomous." Executive Director Mark Plummer (1989) claimed that CSICOP had designated the groups as "autonomous" and "not officially or unofficially affiliated with CSICOP" in 1982. However, publications of the Committee were referring to the groups as "affiliates" at least as late as July 1986 (in *Skeptical Briefs*). With the lawsuits, the concerns grew, and in May 1987, CSICOP published an article in *Skeptical Briefs* titled "Dealing with a Libel Lawsuit." It suggested that the organizations consider purchasing libel insurance and that if they were sued to contact the Committee. Incidents involving Al Seckel have also proved embarrassing for CSICOP. Seckel was an official and active member[18] of the Committee and a founder of the Southern California Skeptics. After years of high profile activity, it was discovered that he did not hold the academic credentials he claimed (Moseley, 1991a). Ironically, the Committee had previously prided itself on exposing hoaxers and con artists, but CSICOP has made no public comment on the Seckel affair.

Rhetoric and Activities

The primary focus of the Committee has been to influence the media and public opinion on the paranormal, and its rhetorical methods and activities are mainly directed to that goal. Thus, the group's language and projects have been fashioned for a popular approach rather than for disinterested scientific commentary.

Choice of Targets

When CSICOP first began, it focused on paranormal topics. This position has shifted slightly over the years, but the Committee primarily re-

[18] Seckel wrote at least three articles for *SI;* he edited two volumes published by Prometheus Books. Seckel's picture appeared three times in *SI;* two of these were taken by Executive Council member, Philip Klass; the third included Klass. Randi served on the board of directors of SCS. Seckel served on CSICOP's College and University Lecture Series Subcommittee along with Paul Kurtz and Ray Hyman. The leadership of CSICOP was well acquainted with Seckel.

stricts its commentary to areas considered marginal or "fringe" by the scientific establishment. Carl Sagan (1987) gave an extensive listing of topics covered by the Committee:

> the Bermuda Triangle; "Big Foot" and the Loch Ness monster; "crashed" flying saucers; claims that you can levitate yourself by meditating; ESP; the view that the Earth is really flat; the Shroud of Turin; divining rods and water witching; Nostradamus; the notion that more crimes are committed when the moon is full; palmistry; numerology; "remote viewing"; cult archaeology; a Soviet elephant that talks fluent Russian and a Soviet "sensitive" who, blindfolded, reads books with her fingertips; Edgar Cayce and other "prophets," sleeping and awake; diet quackery; ancient maps of Antarctica; "dream telepathy"; faith-healer fraud; analysis of a poltergeist in Columbus, Ohio, and how the scam was discovered; fire walking; phrenology; the "hundredth monkey" confusion; biorhythms; creationism; the emotional lives of plants; the systematically inept predictions of Jeanne Dixon and others; dianetics; Carlos Castenada [*sic*] and "sorcery"; the search for Noah's Ark; the "Amityville Horror" hoax; miracles; mummies' curses; Atlantis and other "lost" continents; and innumerable cases of acute credulity by newspapers, magazines, and television specials and news programs. (p. 12)

Although this is not a complete list, it is representative. A quick scan of the above will reveal few topics that have any substantial scientific constituency that champions their investigation. The International Society of Cryptozoology, the Society for Scientific Exploration, and the Parapsychological Association (PA) are perhaps the only three professional scientific societies that could be said to investigate a few of these areas. Of these three, the PA has by far the highest professional-level publication standards.

CSICOP has a policy of not conducting research itself, and this has reduced its vulnerability to criticism. Sociologists of science Pinch and Collins (1984) examined the benefits of this policy. They noted that CSICOP's tactics:

> can only be used in complete safety by organizations that do not engage in controversial science themselves. Only by avoiding having to face up to the problems of doing controversial science, and by avoiding the changed consciousness concerning scientific method which accompanies such engagement, can an attack from the canonical model be sustained without difficulty. (p. 539)

In fact, they specifically suggested that the critics not engage in empirical research if they were to be effective in promoting their agenda. They pointed out that in controversial areas, qualified scientists are often engaged in disputes over research findings and interpretations and that a large component of establishing scientific knowledge involves human negotiation and not just "consulting the facts." If CSICOP had continued to undertake its own research, scientists might again point out errors in its

procedures and ambiguities in its interpretations. That could threaten CSICOP's image of authority.

Rhetorical Stance

Statements by CSICOP stress the importance of its mission and urge that others become involved. CSICOP portrays itself as a tiny minority battling an overwhelming, irrational tide.[19] In fact, there is almost an apocalyptic strain in some writing. An announcement of the founding of the Committee stated: "We ought not to assume that the scientific enlightenment will continue indefinitely . . . like the Hellenic civilization, it may be overwhelmed by irrationalism, subjectivism, and obscurantism" (Kurtz, 1976b). Members suggest that some beliefs are dangerous and must be combatted urgently.

Rhetoric to establish scientific legitimacy. The Committee emphasizes its claim of being "scientific," and the leadership seems very conscious of this task. The back cover of most issues of *SI* lists the *stated* objectives, all of which are scientific. The recruiting of prestigious scientists as figureheads also enhances its credibility. However, Dennis Rawlins, former Executive Council member (and still an extreme skeptic), reported that some fellow councillors privately admitted to him that the word "scientific" should not have appeared in the name of CSICOP (personal communication, April 20, 1987). He directly quoted one member as describing *SI* as "a propaganda sheet . . . essentially [a] rhetorical magazine that is to go to shapers of opinion like editors."[20] Rawlins has considerable documentation for this and many other revealing statements.

In seeking to enhance its legitimacy, CSICOP largely ignores the refereed scientific journals that deal with the paranormal (e.g., *Journal of Parapsychology, Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research, Journal of Scientific Exploration, Journal of UFO Studies, Cryptozoology*). The PA-affiliated *Journal of Parapsychology* has been published for more than 50 years, the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* for more than 80. The existence of these journals is rarely acknowledged in the pages of *SI*, and when they are mentioned, it is usually only in passing.[21] In fact, the Committee claims that "the *Skeptical Inquirer* is the only major periodical in the world that examines paranormal

[19] Despite their self-portrayal as a small, struggling minority, the circulation of *SI* dwarfs that of the scientific parapsychology journals, as seen in Figure 1.

[20] This can be compared with a published statement made by Gardner (Barcellos, 1979, p. 242).

[21] Elsewhere I have described this strategy as "dissuading as debunking," as displayed in articles by Ray Hyman (Hansen, 1991). By implying that there is little or no scientific parapsychological research, readers are dissuaded from locating the refereed scientific journals and examining the reports themselves.

and occult claims from a scientific viewpoint'' (CSICOP fund-raising letter of September 18, 1987).

Religious metaphor. CSICOP's rhetoric sometimes invokes religious metaphors. The dust jacket of one of Randi's (1990b) recent books describes him as having ''missionary zeal.'' In introducing an earlier book of Randi's, Isaac Asimov wrote: ''We may find salvation through the wise use of science'' (1980, p. x). Lawrence Cranberg, a president of the Austin society, has described his group as ''engaged in scientific missionary work'' (Clarke, 1986). Even some behavior of skeptics can be seen as metaphorically religious. Members of local affiliates have worked as ''missionaries,'' passing out skeptical literature to heretical ''believers'' at psychic fairs and similar events (e.g., Leonhard & Butler, 1986; Mayhew, 1985–1986). A quasireligious orientation was apparent to one reporter from a major science magazine when Susan Blackmore presented at the 1986 CSICOP conference in Colorado. Blackmore emotionally described her own failure to find evidence for ESP. Speaking to me, the reporter characterized Blackmore's presentation as being ''like a testimonial at an AA [Alcoholics Anonymous] meeting.'' Nicholas Wade (1977a), writing in *Science,* described CSICOP's magazine as ''the sword of its faith'' (p. 646).

Decrying the ''dangers'' of the paranormal. Even at the beginning of CSICOP, the Committee decried the ''dangers'' of the paranormal. Boyce Rensberger (who was awarded CSICOP's ''Responsibility in Journalism Award'' [''CSICOP Awards,'' 1986]) reported that the Committee claimed that belief in ''parapsychology may bring a society of 'unreason.' '' It was also asserted that ''some 200 people were known to have killed themselves as a result of believing an unfavorable horoscope, palm reading or other alleged forecast of the future'' (Rensberger, 1977). No support was given for this statement, and as far as I can tell, none has appeared since. CSICOP has continued to proclaim the ''dangers.'' A fund-raising letter signed by the Executive Council declared: ''Belief in paranormal phenomena is still growing, and the dangers to our society are real'' (dated March 23, 1985).

Gary Posner, an M.D. and leader of the Tampa Bay Skeptics, has claimed that believers in the paranormal may have a pathological medical condition, saying they may be ''afflicted with a thought disorder that manifests in . . . a faulty sense of reality'' and their ''irrational behavior . . . may be more compatible with a diagnosis of ambulatory schizophrenia . . . than with mere naiveté'' (1978, p. 79). Posner made this statement despite the fact that surveys show that over half the population in this country has had psychic experiences (Greeley, 1975; Haraldsson & Houtkooper, 1991).

James Alcock (1981) expresses fear in his anticipation of psi application:

> But what chaos we would have. There would, of course, be no privacy, since by extrasensory perception one could see even into people's minds. Dictators would no longer have to trust the words of their followers; they could ''know'' their feelings. . . . What would happen when two adversaries each tried to harm the other via PK? The gunfights of the Old American West would probably pale by comparison. (p. 191)

Several scientists have suggested that emotional resistance and fear of psi are partly responsible for the opposition to parapsychology (e.g., Eisenbud, 1946; Irwin, 1989; LeShan, 1966; Tart, 1982a; Wren-Lewis, 1974). The comments of Wren-Lewis are noteworthy; even before CSICOP began, he wrote: *''But the plain fact is that the clearest evidence of strong emotion nowadays comes from those who have antireligious feelings''* (emphasis in the original; Wren-Lewis, 1974, p. 43). Alcock's writings provide examples that support this contention.

Vilification of advocates of the paranormal. Several CSICOP members portray advocates of the paranormal as loathsome human beings. According to his book, Henry Gordon frequently proclaims: ''Every psychic I know or have heard of is an absolute fraud'' (1987, p. ix). Medical doctor and writer Michael Crichton (1988)[22] observed this tendency of the debunkers and wrote: ''I was disturbed by the intemperate tone of many writers I admired; there was a tendency to attribute the basest motives to their opponents'' (p. 356).

Use of ridicule. The use of ridicule is a pervasive element in the rhetoric of CSICOP and *SI.* Gardner encouraged it by popularizing H. L. Mencken's now frequently quoted ''one horse-laugh is worth ten thousand syllogisms'' (Gardner, 1981, [p. vii]). Lest there be any remaining confusion, Gardner later made his position explicit:

> The rest of us did not regard *debunking* as such a negative word. We felt that when pseudoscience is far enough out on the fringes of irrationalism, it is fair game for humor, and at times even ridicule. (1983a, p. 213)

Yet another example of belittling the opposition is the subtitle of the first edition of Randi's (1980) book, *Flim-Flam!: The Truth About Unicorns, Parapsychology, and Other Delusions.* The general use of ridicule by CSICOP can be seen in the pages of *SI,* where caricatures and cartoons are used to denigrate those discussed. Such illustrations are very rare in scientific journals but are common fare in religious magazines such as *American Atheist* and *Free Inquiry.*

Influencing the Media

The treatment of the paranormal in the media is a primary concern of CSICOP. This emphasis is obvious in its *Manual for Local, Regional and*

[22] Crichton had originally prepared a lecture after a promise from CSICOP Fellow Paul MacCready to secure an invitation to speak to the Southern California Skeptics. The invitation never came, and Crichton included the prepared talk as a 23-page chapter in his book. The Public Relations Director of CSICOP reviewed Crichton's book for *SI* but did not even allude to the chapter dealing with CSICOP and the skeptics (Karr, 1989).

National Groups (1987). Seventeen pages are devoted to "Handling the Media" and "Public Relations"; in contrast, only three pages are given to "Scientific Investigation." No scientific references were cited in the "Scientific Investigation" section, but the reader was referred to Kurtz's (1986) book, *The Transcendental Temptation,* for an explanation of the scientific method.[23] The priority given to the media is also apparent in many articles in *SI* and in newsletters of the local groups.

Kurtz (1985c) recognizes that "the media are a dominant influence in the growth of belief in the paranormal" (p. 357), and at one time he was reported to appear on 5 to 10 TV or radio shows a week (Bartlett, 1987), which attests to the priority he gives to the media. In fact, the mass media may be the most effective way to communicate with the *scientific* community regarding the paranormal. McClenon (1984) found that most elite scientists form their opinions about parapsychology from newspaper reports.

Nationally aired television programs that treat psychic topics in a neutral or positive light are a CSICOP target. The Committee filed a complaint with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) under the Fairness Doctrine regarding the NBC series "Exploring the Unknown" (Kurtz, 1977a, 1978d). The FCC rejected the complaint, and CSICOP appealed the ruling in U.S. District Court (Kurtz, 1979b). The Committee also complained to NBC regarding its program "The Amazing World of Psychic Phenomena" (Kurtz, 1979a). CSICOP was especially disturbed by the NOVA program, "The Case of ESP," even though a number of Committee members were featured in it. CSICOP wrote an open letter of complaint to the executive producer, and the cover story of the Summer 1984 issue of *SI* was an attack on that NOVA segment.

One of the long-term projects of CSICOP has been to get every newspaper astrology column to carry a disclaimer. At the beginning of the project, the Committee issued a press release; two weeks later, it sent a letter to "all U.S. newspapers," calling on them to publish CSICOP's disclaimer (Frazier, 1985). The project has met with limited success. The Summer 1986 issue of *SI* noted that six papers then carried a statement, and the Spring 1990 magazine reported that 33 papers did (Frazier, 1990a).

The Committee has made a concerted effort to cultivate contacts within the media. For example, Leon Jaroff, an editor for *Time,* was made a Fellow of the Committee. He wrote an article for *Time* focusing on Randi's debunking work; the piece included a full-page picture of Randi (Jaroff, 1988). Needless to say, such publicity would be expensive, if purchased. CSICOP publicizes its "Responsibility in Journalism" awards, which are given at their conventions, and Committee members have presented material at a science workshop for journalists (Frazier, 1989a, p. 123).

[23] Among other things, *The Transcendental Temptation* suggested that Jesus and Lazarus had a homosexual relationship.

In the summer of 1990, *SI* carried an announcement of the formation of a new organization called the Center for Inquiry ("Center for Inquiry," 1990; Flynn, 1990) whose purpose was to promote the skeptical view in the electronic media. Tom Flynn, cofounder of Catholics Anonymous, was named director. One of the projects was to produce a news magazine format radio show with skeptics such as James Alcock, Susan Blackmore, and Ray Hyman. (For several months the term "Center for Inquiry" was used by CSICOP in more than one context; it now refers only to the headquarters complex [Karr, 1991].)

The local groups have been active with the media also. As might be expected, the affiliates concern themselves more with local radio and newspapers rather than with the national television networks. Some of the groups have been especially active. Even as early as its fourth meeting, the Austin group listed seven different media contacts or appearances for that month. One member volunteered to organize a "Psychic Alert" system to contact other members by phone when call-in radio shows covered the paranormal (McFadden, 1982). The Cleveland society states that they "try to serve as a media resource in Northeast Ohio" ("Membership," 1986). One of their members agreed to organize a speakers bureau, and others were reported to be developing a weekly radio program (O'Connor, 1985). Another issue of their newsletter carried an article on how to write effective letters to editors (Rickards, 1986). The Colorado organization is likewise involved; in a letter from Béla Scheiber dated June 8, 1986 requesting payment of dues, it noted that they have "assisted local TV stations in news projects. Provided speakers for radio talk shows. Responded to articles in the local press." The Northwest Skeptics have been active too. Some of the lead articles in their newsletters have such titles as "Media & Skeptics" (Dennett, 1985a) and "Skeptics on T.V." (Dennett, 1985b). The above are just a *few* examples. Contact with the media is one of the most common topics discussed in newsletters of the local groups.

Magicians' Activities

The conjurors in CSICOP have influence, and their involvement has proven beneficial for both the organization and the magicians. Magic performances are frequently included in CSICOP's conferences. Daryl Bem performed at the first international conference in 1983, and David Berglas performed at the London conference 1985. Three magicians performed at the banquet of the 1986 conference held in Colorado, and Penn and Teller presented a show at the 1987 convention.

Many of the local groups have also featured magic performances. Conjuror David Alexander performed at a banquet of the Southern California Skeptics (Mitchell, 1986); the Cleveland debunkers' group arranged for Randi to speak ("Professional Charlatan," 1985), and the Houston group presented Steve Shaw as a guest speaker ("HAST Dinner," 1987). Rory Coker performed and explained several mentalism effects for the Austin

society (McFadden, 1983). One of the founding members of the National Capital Area Skeptics (NCAS) is Jamy Ian Swiss, an active magician who appeared on the September 1987 cover of *Genii*. Swiss performed a number of times to promote the skeptics, and members of NCAS produced a séance show apparently based on Eugene Burger's (1986) book *Spirit Theater*. One of the most aggressive groups in promoting magic has been the Sacramento Skeptics Society. They published a column describing fake psychic effects and methods in their newsletter,[24] and their March 1987 meeting featured seven conjurors.

The educational efforts by magicians are effective in attracting publicity to the groups. The conjurors also benefit because professional magicians need publicity in order to obtain new bookings. Leadership roles in CSICOP and local groups can provide visibility and have thus enhanced the careers of several, notably James Randi and Robert Steiner.

Research by magicians. As mentioned earlier, CSICOP conducts no research itself, and even the three scientist members of the Executive Council have undertaken little research on their own. As far as I know, of the three (Alcock, Beyerstein, and Hyman, all psychologists), only Hyman has published even one scientific ESP experiment (McClenon & Hyman, 1987), and that study fell "short of scientific acceptability" under Hyman's (1984–1985, p. 129) own criteria because it was not published in a refereed journal. In contrast, magician James Randi has engaged in much "research," and this has been given frequent coverage in the pages of *SI* (e.g., Randi, 1983a, 1983b).

In 1983, sociologist Harry Collins warned against giving nonscientists control over scientific procedures. He spoke specifically of conjurors, noting that the magic community is "a group whose values include secretiveness and financial self-interest above the quest for truth" (Collins, 1983, p. 931). Collins's words were to prove prescient, as illustrated by Randi's involvement in the "high dilution" affair. In 1988, Jacques Benveniste and colleagues published a paper in *Nature* that gave support to some ideas of homeopathy (Davenas et al., 1988). After the publication of the Davenas et al. report, a small group was named to examine the procedures of the experiments, and Randi was appointed as one of the three members. The subsequent accounts depict Randi as capitalizing on the opportunity for showmanship and disrupting the business of the laboratory (Benveniste, 1988). Randi made public innuendoes of fraud and incompetence. Later he gave presentations about his involvement. During one of them, he mimicked the Gallic mannerisms of Benveniste and made highly

[24] These columns sometimes have been taken word for word from *Magick*, a newsletter for mentalists (e.g., compare the column in *Psientific American*, July 1986, pp. 3–4, with *Magick*, No. 316, pp. 1577–1578; or *Psientific American*, January 1987, pp. 5–6, with *Magick*, No. 322, p. 1609; no credit was given to *Magick*). Terence Sandbeck, president of the Sacramento Skeptics Society, admitted he was responsible for this (personal communication, April 4, 1987).

derogatory comments about "French science"; many in the audience were offended (Inglis, 1988b).

SI eventually published an article critical of Randi (Shneour, 1989), though it was relegated to the back pages. Shneour wrote specifically of "careless" criticisms, "squander[ing]" "credibility" (p. 95), and even noted that there was a "preconceived bias that Benveniste's data was fraudulently generated" (p. 94). Both Collins (1988) and Shneour (1989) warned that such practices could be destructive to the conduct of science. Randi (1990a) had little to say in reply.[25]

Although the magicians in CSICOP have attacked psychics, they have said very little about people such as Kreskin,[26] David Hoy, or other similar entertainers who are well connected in the magic community.[27] Many mentalists maintain that performers should claim genuine abilities even if they do not believe in them. Certainly Randi, Ray Hyman, and Martin Gardner[28] are well aware of this situation, yet they rarely, if ever, criticize publicly such performers. Hyman holds membership in the Psychic Entertainers Association, which has a number of members who encourage performers to falsely claim psychic abilities. If Gardner, Hyman, or Randi undertook an exposé, they would likely antagonize the conjuring establishment.

Protesting the Paranormal in Academia

Another task of the local groups has been to protest courses favorable to the paranormal. CSICOP encouraged such opposition by publishing an article, "Pseudoscience in the Name of the University," subtitled: "What

[25] Randi's antics should have come as no surprise to members of CSICOP because he has engaged in similar behavior in relation to psi research. Krippner (1977), Rao (1984), Targ and Puthoff (1977, pp. 182–186), and Tart (1982b) have all documented glaring errors of Randi. Dennis Stillings has demonstrated that "Randi is capable of gross distortion of facts" (Truzzi, 1987, p. 89). Randi has been quoted as saying, "I *always* have an out" with regard to his $10,000 challenge (Rawlins, 1981, p. 89). Puthoff and Targ (1977) documented a number of mistakes. In a published, handwritten, signed letter, Randi replied offering $1,000 if any claimed error could be demonstrated (see Fuller, 1979). Fuller proved Randi wrong. In a rejoinder to Puthoff and Targ (1977), Randi reversed himself (for a clear example, see point number 15 in Randi, 1982, p. 223). Randi should have paid the $1,000, but he never did.

[26] Kreskin appeared at the 1991 CSICOP convention as an authority on hypnosis, and a recent Prometheus catalog advertises one of his books. Surprisingly, Kreskin (1973) claims psychic ability (e.g., "In using ESP as a form of communication, I receive information in images rather than in symbols" [p. 8]; "*by telepathic suggestion alone*, I ordered her to choose Albuquerque, which she did" [p. 40]). His more recent publicity material makes similar claims (e.g., "The Amazing Kreskin: Biography," 1988).

[27] A rare exception was a brief attack on Russ Burgess, a member of the Psychic Entertainers Association (Rawlins, 1977, pp. 74–75).

[28] Earlier in his career, Gardner wrote an article under a pseudonym suggesting that magician Stanley Jaks had genuine psychic powers (Groth, 1952) (personal communication, June 7, 1989).

Should be Done About Extension Courses That Use the University's Prestige to Promote Pseudoscience?'' (Lederer & Singer, 1983). This piece decried the growing number of such courses affiliated with universities.[29] It appears that not all local affiliates have been active in these protests, but some have (e.g., ''CSU Sells Pseudoscience,'' 1988a, 1988b; Dennett, 1985–1986; ''Psychics and Skeptics,'' 1985; Scheiber, 1986). The efforts have been directed primarily toward noncredit courses in adult education programs, but some have targeted university courses for credit. Not surprisingly, these campaigns generated antagonism toward the groups, and in the Pendragon case, discussed later, legal action was taken because of such a campaign. In November 1987, CSICOP issued a short statement saying that academic institutions should ''ensure that there is a proper procedure for the approval of the content of such courses and that the persons teaching such courses should have the appropriate training and qualifications'' (''CSICOP statement,'' 1987).

Other routes have been taken to promote skeptical views within academia. Some of the local groups offer courses, lecture series, and workshops on the paranormal. Others have awarded prizes for essay contests and science fairs, and CSICOP has instituted a campus lecture series (Sandhu, 1990). The 1991 conference had a session titled ''Teaching Critical Thinking With the *Skeptical Inquirer*.''[30]

New Horizons

In a 1986 editorial, Kendrick Frazier discussed CSICOP's broadening horizons. He indicated that the Committee would revise its scope to include topics outside the paranormal. Some of the topics listed were creationism, chiropractic, dream interpretation, and arthritis cures. The cultural scene of the paranormal has been continually shifting, and CSICOP has had to slightly redefine its role.

New Topics

Opposition to the creationists is one activity that attracted attention. The Southern California Skeptics enlisted the aid of 72 Nobel laureates in filing an *amicus curiae* brief regarding a Louisiana statute promoting creationism (Seckel, 1986–1987). This provided CSICOP with increased visibility and attracted allies in its battle against the paranormal. The National Center for

[29] Ironically, this article was coauthored by CSICOP member Barry Singer, who was charged with ''inappropriate'' teaching of his own course. He lost his academic position because he openly gave students credit for sexual experiences (Singer, 1982/83). CSICOP member Vern Bullough (1982/83) stated that ''Singer's account . . . raises serious questions of ethics'' and ''he quite obviously violated the rights of his students'' (p. 10).

[30] An article by Swords (1990) indirectly suggests that the use of *SI* might not be altogether effective.

Science Education, an anticreationist group, has lumped psi with creationism and health quackery in its literature (e.g., its brochure titled *What Can You Do About Anti-Evolutionism?*, undated).

CSICOP also involves itself in the medical arena and has a ''Paranormal Health Claims Subcommittee.'' Recently, *SI* has included a few articles addressing fringe areas of medicine. Prometheus Books published a book by two philosophers attacking holistic medicine (Stalker & Glymour, 1985). (Stalker is a CSICOP member.) The National Council Against Health Fraud made CSICOP an affiliate. They too have joined the battle against the paranormal and published an article decrying Shirley MacLaine in their newsletter (''Is Shirley MacLaine,'' 1987).

As can be seen in Figure 1, the circulation of *SI* has stagnated after rapid growth. This must be of concern to the Committee. In a recent note, Frazier (1990b) indicated that more attention was being given to ''science, critical inquiry, and science education'' (p. 116). This further suggests that CSICOP is striving to define its role. Media interest in the paranormal can vary, and during some periods the paranormal is not always considered newsworthy. Alternative topics may attract attention when the paranormal fails to do so. However, there are some hazards in diversification. If the Committee becomes too broadly focused, it runs the risk of losing its identity. Whereas there are already a number of organizations engaged in the fights against creationism and quackery, CSICOP has yet to demonstrate that it has something new to offer in these arenas.

The New Age

Perhaps the most pertinent cultural change during CSICOP's existence has been the rise of the New Age movement (Melton, Clark, & Kelly, 1990). The occult explosion of the 1970s resulted in an increased level of belief in the paranormal. A number of participants in the psychic boom were then in their early and mid-twenties. These people have moved into positions of some financial and political power and now form the base for what is called the New Age movement. In fact, several major publications have run stories on this movement (e.g., *New York Times* [Lindsey, 1986]; *U.S. News and World Report* [Levine, Kyle, & Dworkin, 1987]; *Wall Street Journal* [Hughes, 1987]). It is not possible to provide a crisp definition for the New Age, but typically it is associated with channeling, wholistic health, use of crystals, Eastern thought, and psychic abilities. It can be characterized as a network in flux rather than a rigid hierarchical structure (Ferguson, 1980), and there is no agreed upon institutional leadership that might provide inertia and clear identity. The New Age is partly a search for religious and spiritual values, and Hastings (1991, p. 195) suggested that it is a ''revitalization movement,'' a term introduced by anthropologist A. F. C. Wallace (1956). From a sociological perspective, the growth of CSICOP might be seen as a reaction to this movement.

Many aspects of the New Age are opposed by CSICOP, and the Com-

mittee's 1988 conference focused on them (Shore, 1989) as did the Summer 1989 issue of *SI*. *SI* articles on the New Age are usually derogatory and rarely display the disinterested scientific analysis found in papers presented at scientific conferences such as those of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion and the Religious Research Association.

Legal Concerns

One of the problems that will confront the Committee for some time to come is the issue of libel. This problem first emerged with the local affiliates. The cofounder of the Northwest Skeptics, John Merrell, sent press packages to news agencies claiming that psychic Noreen Renier was misleading the public with fraudulent claims. Renier sued and won a judgment of $25,000 (Auerbach, 1991; Guarino, 1986). In 1986, Gharith Pendragon began a battle with the Hawaii Skeptics. He alleged that he lost teaching positions because of pressure the Hawaii Skeptics brought to bear. This led to a publicized legal fight, and CSICOP was named in the suit. It was ultimately settled in CSICOP's favor (Frazier, 1989b), but it undoubtedly cost the Committee considerable time and money. Shortly after the beginning of the Pendragon battle, CSICOP attempted to distance itself somewhat from the local groups and no longer referred to them as affiliates.

But it is not only statements by the local groups that have caused problems. Randi's statements have drawn fire. In an interview for *Twilight Zone Magazine* (Wiater, 1988) and at a meeting of the New York Area Skeptics, Randi claimed that Eldon Byrd, a friend of Uri Geller, was a child molester and in prison. The *New York Skeptic* later admitted this was untrue (''Geller Files,'' 1989), but Byrd sued, naming CSICOP as one of the defendants. Randi also claimed that Geller had launched a blackmail campaign against him (Wiater, 1988), and Geller also filed a number of suits against Randi and CSICOP (Moseley, 1991b). This led to Randi's resignation from the Committee to avoid its being named in subsequent suits. Several newsletters published an appeal from Randi (1991) that said ''I'm in trouble folks. I need help.'' The battle attracted wide media attention, including the *Wall Street Journal* (Marcus, 1991) and *Scientific American* (Rennie, 1991). Whatever the outcomes, these legal battles will undoubtedly prove costly, and according to Mike Sullivan (1991) of the North Texas Skeptics, ''Paul Kurtz warned at the 1991 convention in May that the Committee may not be around for the next annual convention'' because of financial problems.

Conclusions

CSICOP has exerted enormous effort and mobilized considerable resources in its battle against the paranormal. Some of the leaders have devoted much of their professional careers to the cause. Their strenuous

activity attests to the Committee's belief in the importance of the truth or falsity of parapsychological claims and their significance for mankind.

Although recognizing the importance of the paranormal, CSICOP elected not to conduct scientific research, but rather it has undertaken an extended public relations campaign. The Committee actively attempts to influence the media, and it has complained to the FCC under the Fairness Doctrine. CSICOP seeks endorsements from scientific luminaries, despite the fact that few, if any, of these luminaries have ever published scientific research on the paranormal. CSICOP has also fostered a grass roots movement that assists it in influencing popular opinion. These activities display more parallels with political campaigns than with scientific endeavors.

CSICOP's message has often been well received, particularly among scientific leaders. The growth of CSICOP, the circulation figures of *SI*, and the academic credentials of its readership prove that there is wide interest in the paranormal among the most highly educated members of our society. Many readers of *SI* undoubtedly assume that CSICOP presents the best available scientific evidence. The readers are rarely told of the existence of refereed scientific journals that cover parapsychology. The effect of CSICOP's activities is to create a climate of hostility toward the investigation of paranormal claims; indeed, at one CSICOP conference, the announcement of the closing of several parapsychology laboratories was greeted with cheers.

Surveys show that over half the adult population in the U.S. have had psychic experiences and believe in the reality of the phenomena (Gallup, 1982; Greeley, 1975, 1987; Haraldsson & Houtkooper, 1991). Those who have had the experiences but encounter the debunking attitudes of apparent ''scientific authorities'' are likely to conclude that science is a dogma and inapplicable to important aspects of their lives. Vallee (1990) has suggested that debunkers ''are among the primary contributors to the rejection of science by the public'' and are ''contributing to the growth of irrational movements in modern society'' (p. 21). Ironically, CSICOP's activities will likely inhibit scientific research on the paranormal and might potentially foster an increased rejection of science generally.

References

The Academy of Humanism. (1983). *Free Inquiry, 3*(4), 6.

Adams, C. F. (1987). Debunking the ''debunkers'': Where is the pike for CSICOPs? In M. C. Rose (Ed.), *Psychical Research and Spirit: Proceedings of the Academy of Religion and Psychical Research Twelfth Annual Conference* (pp. 53–72).

Adler, J., with Carey, J. (1981, November 16). The magician of math. *Newsweek, 98,* 101.

Advisors. (1986). *Basis* [Bay Area Skeptics Information Sheet], *5*(9), 2.

Alcock, J. E. (1981). *Parapsychology: Science or Magic?* New York: Pergamon.

ALCOCK, J. E. (1985). Parapsychology: The "spiritual" science. *Free Inquiry, 5*(2), 25–35.

THE AMAZING KRESKIN: BIOGRAPHY. (1988, November 26). Zeiterion Theatre presents the amazing Kreskin: The world's foremost mentalist (pp. 9–14). New Bedford, MA.

AMERICAN HUMANIST ASSOCIATION: AHA 35TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING. (1976). *Humanist, 36*(2), 59.

ANDERSON, I. (1987, 16 April). Taking up the sceptics' burden. *New Scientist, 114,* 51–52.

ASIMOV, I. (1980). Introduction: The deadly misinformation. In James Randi, *Flim-Flam! The Truth About Unicorns, Parapsychology, and Other Delusions* (pp. ix–xi). New York: Lippincott & Crowell.

AUERBACH, L. M. (1985). The 1984 CSICOP conference: "Paranormal beliefs: Scientific facts and fictions." *ASPR Newsletter, 11*(3), 9–10.

AUERBACH, L. (1991). Taking a skeptic to court. *Fate, 44*(6), 60–68.

BARCELLOS, A. (1979). A conversation with Martin Gardner. *Two-Year College Mathematics Journal, 10,* 233–244.

BARTLETT, K. (1987, April 12). His "play" is promotion of secular humanism. *Times* (Trenton, NJ), pp. DD1, DD8.

BENVENISTE, J. (1988). Dr Jacques Benveniste replies. *Nature, 334,* 291.

BERKLEY, M. (1987, January 16). Prometheus unbound: A skeptical man with a mission runs a skeptical publishing house. *Publishers Weekly, 231,* 32–34.

BIRDSELL, P. G. (1989). *How Magicians Relate the Occult to Modern Magic: An Investigation and Study*. Simi Valley, CA: Silver Dawn Media.

BOOTH, J. (1988). *Dramatic Magic: The Art of Hidden Secrets*. Los Alamitos, CA: Ridgeway Press.

BULLOUGH, V. (1982/83). A dissenting view. *Free Inquiry, 3*(1), 10, 44.

BURGER, E. (1986). *Spirit Theater: Reflections on the History and Performance of Seances*. New York: Richard Kaufman and Alan Greenberg.

CENTER FOR INQUIRY BRINGS SKEPTICISM TO RADIO, TV. (1990). *Skeptical Inquirer, 14,* 428.

A Century of Doctorates: Data Analysis of Growth and Change: U.S. PhD's—Their Numbers, Origins, Characteristics, and the Institutions From Which They Come. (1978). Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences.

CHESTERTON, G. K., MCCABE, J., BELLOC, H., WARSCHAUER, J., HOBSON, J. A., SINNETT, A. P., CHESTERTON, C., & LEWIS, E. W. [1914]. *Do Miracles Happen?* London: Christian Commonwealth.

CHILD, I. L. (1985). Psychology and anomalous observations: The question of ESP in dreams. *American Psychologist, 40,* 1219–1230.

CLARK, J. (1987, February). Censoring the paranormal. *Omni, 9,* 33.

CLARK, J. (1990). Skeptics and the New Age. In J. G. Melton, J. Clark, & A. A. Kelly (Eds.), *New Age Encyclopedia* (pp. 417–427). Detroit, MI: Gale Research.

CLARK, J., & MELTON, J. G. (1979a). Marcello Truzzi talks about . . . The crusade against the paranormal. Part I. *Fate, 33* [32](9), 70–76.

CLARK, J., & MELTON, J. G. (1979b). Marcello Truzzi talks about . . . The crusade against the paranormal. Part II. *Fate, 33* [32](10), 87–94.

CLARKE [CLARK], J. (1986, June). Militant debunkers. *Omni, 8,* 90.

CLODD, E. (1917). *The Question: "If a Man Die, Shall He Live Again?" Job xiv. 14. A Brief History and Examination of Modern Spiritualism*. London: Grant Richards.

COLLINS, H. (1983, June 30). Magicians in the laboratory: A new role to play. *New Scientist, 98,* 929–931.

COLLINS, H. (1988, October 21). Undiluted action. *Times Higher Education Supplement,* p. 13.

CONTENTS. (1975, November). *New Humanist, 91.*

COON, D. J. (in press). Testing the limits of sense and science: American experimental psychologists combat spiritualism, 1880–1920. *American Psychologist.*

CORNELL, J. (1984). Science vs. the paranormal. *Psychology Today, 18*(3), 28–34.

Corrections to last Laser. (1986, August–October). *Laser* [Los Angeles Skeptics Evaluative Report], *2,* 13.

COULMAN, M. U. (1985). Where are the women? *Basis* [Bay Area Skeptics Information Sheet], *4*(3), 3.

CRICHTON, M. (1988). *Travels*. New York: Knopf.

CSICOP AWARDS. (1986). *Skeptical Inquirer, 11,* 14.

CSICOP STATEMENT ON INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR NON-CREDIT COURSES. (1987, December). *Skeptical Briefs, 3,* 1.

CSU SELLS PSEUDOSCIENCE: PART 2. (1988a, July/August). *Rocky Mountain Skeptic, 6,* 3.

CSU SELLS PSEUDOSCIENCE—AS PSEUDOPHILOSOPHY: (THIS TIME IT'S FOR 3 CREDIT HOURS). (1988b, September/October). *Rocky Mountain Skeptic, 6,* 9.

DAVENAS, E., BEAUVAIS, F., AMARA, J., OBERBAUM, M., ROBINZON, B., MIADONNA, A., TEDESCHI, A., POMERANZ, B., FORTNER, P., BELON, P., SAINTE-LAUDY, J., POITEVIN, B., & BENVENISTE, J. (1988). Human basophil degranulation triggered by very dilute antiserum against IgE. *Nature, 333,* 816–818.

D[ENNETT], M. (1985a, May). Media & skeptics. *Northwest Skeptic,* No. 7, 1–2.

D[ENNETT], M. (1985b, August). Skeptics on T.V. *Northwest Skeptic,* No. 8, 1.

D[ENNETT], M. (1985–1986, December 85/January 86). Astrology on campus: News of what is happening in the Pacific Northwest. *Northwest Skeptic,* No. 9, 1.

DUTCH, S. (1986). Four decades of fringe literature. *Skeptical Inquirer, 10,* 342–351.
EISENBUD, J. (1946). Telepathy and problems of psychoanalysis. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly, 15,* 32–87.
ELLIS, A. (1988). Is religiosity pathological? *Free Inquiry, 8*(2), 27–32.
ELSEWHERE IN PHILLY. (1985, August). *ASTOP, the Press!* [Newsletter of the Austin Society to Oppose Pseudoscience], *1,* p. [4].
FERGUSON, M. (1980). *The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformation in the 1980s.* Los Angeles, CA: J. P. Tarcher.
FLEW, A. (1953). *A New Approach to Psychical Research.* London: Watts.
FLYNN, T. (1986/87). Secular humanist center founded. *Free Inquiry, 7*(1), 9.
FLYNN, T. (1990). Center for Inquiry debuts on electronic media. *Skeptical Inquirer, 15,* 35.
F[RAZIER], K. (1982). CSICOP briefs. *Skeptical Inquirer, 7*(1), 14–15.
FRAZIER, K. (1984). From psychics and ESP beliefs to UFOs and quacks: Highlights of CSICOP's first international conference. *Skeptical Inquirer, 8,* 194–202.
FRAZIER, K. (1985). CSICOP's call for a disclaimer on newspaper astrology columns. *Skeptical Inquirer, 9,* 194–196.
FRAZIER, K. (1986). The path ahead: Opportunities, challenges, and an expanded view. *Skeptical Inquirer, 11,* 2–6.
F[RAZIER], K. (1989a). Conference for journalists focuses on pseudoscience. *Skeptical Inquirer, 13,* 123–124.
F[RAZIER], K. (1989b). CSICOP wins Hawaii court case. *Skeptical Inquirer, 13,* 114–115.
FRAZIER, K. (1990a). Astrology disclaimer now in 33 newspapers. *Skeptical Inquirer, 15,* 21–22.
FRAZIER, K. (1990b). From the editor: New directions, awesome science, and critical inquiry. *Skeptical Inquirer, 14,* 114–116.
FULLER, C. (1979). Randi rides again. *Fate, 32*(7), 37–44.
GARDNER, M. (1952). *In the Name of Science.* New York: Putnam's.
GARDNER, M. (1957). *Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science.* New York: Dover.
GARDNER, M. (1981). *Science: Good, Bad and Bogus.* Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.
GARDNER, M. (1983a). *Order and Surprise.* Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.
GARDNER, M. (1983b). *The Whys of a Philosophical Scrivener.* New York: William Morrow.
GARDNER, M. (1991). Notes of a fringe-watcher: Cal Thomas, the big bang, and Forrest Mims. *Skeptical Inquirer, 15,* 355–358.
GELLER FILES $13.5 MILLION LAW SUIT AGAINST RANDI. (1989, Fall). *New York Skeptic, 2,* 9, 12.

GORDON, H. (1987). *ExtraSensory Deception: ESP, Psychics, Shirley MacLaine, Ghosts, UFOs . . .* Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.
GREELEY, A. M. (1975). *The Sociology of the Paranormal: A Reconnaissance.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
GREELEY, A. (1987, January/February). Mysticism goes mainstream. *American Health, 6,* 47–49.
GREENE, B. (1986, August 20). Even a genius has a few bad days. *Chicago Tribune,* Sec. 5, p. 1.
GROTH, G. [M. GARDNER]. (1952, October). He writes with your hand. *Fate, 5,* 39–43.
GUARINO, V. (1986, September 14). Psychic wins suit against detractor. *Mail Tribune* (Medford, OR), p. 3A.
HANSEL, C. E. M. (1966). *ESP: A Scientific Evaluation.* New York: Scribner's.
HANSEN, G. P. (1990a). Magicians who endorsed psychic phenomena. *Linking Ring, 70*(8), 52–54.
HANSEN, G. P. (1990b). Magicians who endorsed psychic phenomena. *Linking Ring, 70*(9), 63–65, 109.
HANSEN, G. P. (1991). The elusive agenda: Dissuading as debunking in Ray Hyman's *The Elusive Quarry. Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research, 85,* 193–203.
HANSEN, G. P. (in press). Magicians on the paranormal: An essay with a review of three books. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research.*
HARALDSSON, E., & HOUTKOOPER, J. M. (1991). Psychic experiences in the multinational human values study: Who reports them? *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research, 85,* 145–165.
HARWOOD, W. R. (1986). Yahweh: A morally retarded god. *Free Inquiry, 6*(4), 59.
HAST DINNER MEETING. (1987, April). *Stoplight* [Newsletter of the Houston Association for Scientific Thinking], p. [1].
HASTINGS, A. (1991). *With the Tongues of Men and Angels: A Study of Channeling.* Forth Worth, TX: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
HILL, J. (1986, March/May). Creation/evolution: Creation celebration '86. *Rocky Mountain Skeptic, 4,* 3–4.
HOFSTADTER, D. R. (1982, February). Metamagical themas: About two kinds of inquiry: "*National Enquirer*" and "*The Skeptical Inquirer.*" *Scientific American, 246,* 18–26.
HOLDEN, C. (1986). Amazing Randi one of 25 MacArthur genius winners. *Science, 233,* 517.
HUGHES, K. A. (1987, April 1). For personal insights, some try channels out of this world: Communicating with spirits is becoming a new rage for new age philosophers. *Wall Street Journal,* pp. 1, 23.
HUMANIST MANIFESTO II. (1973). *Humanist, 33*(5), 4–9.
HYMAN, R. (1984–1985). Outracing the evidence: The muddled "mind

race.'' Review of *The Mind Race* by R. Targ and K. Harary. *Skeptical Inquirer, 9,* 125–145.

HYMAN, R. (1985). Paranormal, unbelief in the. In G. Stein (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Unbelief* (pp. 504–510). Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.

HYMAN, R. (1987, May). Proper criticism. *Skeptical Briefs, 3,* 4–5.

INGLIS, N. L. (1988a, Fall). CSICOP and *SI* at the Humanist World Congress. *National Capital Area Skeptical Eye, 2,* 5.

INGLIS, N. L. (1988b, Fall). Randi on the offensive at the humanist congress. *National Capital Area Skeptical Eye, 2,* 1, 5.

IRWIN, H. J. (1989). On paranormal disbelief: The psychology of the sceptic. In G. K. Zollschan, J. F. Schumaker, & G. F. Walsh (Eds.), *Exploring the Paranormal: Perspectives on Belief and Experience* (pp. 305–312). Bridport, Dorset, England: Prism Press.

IS SHIRLEY MACLAINE A VICTIM OF FRAUD? (1987, January/February). *NCAHF Newsletter, 10,* 1.

JAHN, R. G. (1982). The persistent paradox of psychic phenomena: An engineering perspective. *Proceedings of the IEEE, 70,* 136–170.

JAROFF, L. (1988, June 13). Profile: Fighting against flimflam: James Randi uses his skill as a professional magician to expose psychics, astrologers, spiritualists, channelers, faith healers and a host of mystics and charlatans. *Time, 131,* 70–72.

KARR, B. (1989). New age wanderings. Review of *Travels* by Michael Crichton. *Skeptical Inquirer, 13,* 189–191.

KARR, B. (1991, February). CSICOP clairifies [*sic*] new ventures. *Skeptical Briefs* (New Series), 1, 12.

KELLER, E., & KELLER, M-L. (1969). *Miracles in Dispute: A Continuing Debate* (M. Kohl, Trans.). Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press. (Original work published 1968)

KRESKIN. (1973). *The Amazing World of Kreskin.* New York: Random House.

KRIPPNER, S. (1977). Editorial. *Psychoenergetic Systems, 2,* 5–11.

KURTZ, P. (1975). Astrology and gullibility. *Humanist, 35*(6), 20.

KURTZ, P. (1976a). The aims of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal. *Zetetic, 1*(1), 6–7.

KURTZ, P. (1976b). Committee to scientifically investigate claims of paranormal and other phenomena. *Humanist, 36*(3), 28.

KURTZ, P. (1977a). Committee files formal FCC complaint against NBC. *Zetetic: Skeptical Inquirer, 2*(1), 15.

KURTZ, P. (1977b). The psychology of belief. *Humanist, 37*(3), 42–43.

KURTZ, P. (1978a). From the chairman. *Skeptical Inquirer, 2*(2), 130–132.

KURTZ, P. (1978b). *The Humanist's* crusade against parapsychology: A discussion. Part One. On the art of quoting out of context: A response to the Rockwells' critique. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research, 72,* 349–357.

KURTZ, P. (1978c). Media messiahs, psychic saviors, and space gurus. *Humanist, 38*(1), 4–5.

KURTZ, P. (1978d). News of the committee. *Skeptical Inquirer, 3*(1), 3–4.

KURTZ, P. (1979a). Committee meets in Washington. *Skeptical Inquirer, 3*(3), 15.

KURTZ, P. (1979b). CSICP appeals ruling of FCC. *Skeptical Inquirer, 4*(1), 2–4.

KURTZ, P. (1985a, Autumn). Controversy: Paul Kurtz on sceptic baiting. *New Humanist, 100,* 39–40.

KURTZ, P. (1985b). *Exuberance: An Affirmative Philosophy of Life.* Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books. (Original work published 1977)

KURTZ, P. (1985c). The responsibilities of the media and paranormal claims. *Skeptical Inquirer, 9,* 357–362.

KURTZ, P. (1986). *The Transcendental Temptation: A Critique of Religion and the Paranormal.* Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.

LAMONT, C. (1932). *Issues of Immortality: A Study in Implications.* New York: Henry Holt.

LAMONT, C. (1935). *The Illusion of Immortality.* New York: Putnam's.

LASAGNA, L. (1984). Let magic cast its spell. *The Sciences, 24*(3), 10–12.

LEDERER, R. J., & SINGER, B. (1983). Pseudoscience in the name of the university: What should be done about extension courses that use the university's prestige to promote pseudoscience? *Skeptical Inquirer, 7*(3), 57–62.

LEONHARD, A., & BUTLER, K. (1986, December 30). Summary of activities and accomplishments. *Hawaii Skeptics Action Letter,* pp. 1–6.

LESHAN, L. (1966). Some psychological hypotheses on the nonacceptance of parapsychology as a science. *International Journal of Parapsychology, 8,* 367–385.

LEVINE, A., KYLE, C., & DWORKIN, P. (1987, February 9). Mystics on main street: While skeptics cast doubts, psychics count dollars. *U.S. News & World Report, 102,* 67–69.

LEWIN, L. (1979). *Science and the Paranormal.* Tunbridge Wells, Kent, England: Institute for Cultural Research.

LEWIS, J. R. (1989). *The New Age Movement: A Bibliography of Conservative Christian Literature* (Santa Barbara Centre Occasional Paper #2). Santa Barbara, CA: Santa Barbara Centre for Humanistic Studies.

LINDSEY, R. (1986, September 29). Spiritual concepts drawing a different breed of adherent. *New York Times,* pp. A1, B12.

LOCHER, F. C. (Ed.). (1978). Gardner, Martin 1914–. *Contemporary Authors Volumes 73–76* (p. 226). Detroit, MI: Gale Research Company.

[LUNN, A., & HALDANE, J. B. S.]. (1935). *Science and the Supernatural: A Correspondence Between Arnold Lunn and J. B. S. Haldane.* New York: Sheed & Ward.

MADACHY, J. S. (1990). Martin Gardner—A 75th birthday dedication. *Journal of Recreational Mathematics, 22*(1), 1.

MAGIC, MYSTERIES AND MIRTH FROM ACE AND THE CORE-MEN. (1987, March). *Psientific American* [Newsletter of Sacramento Skeptics Society], p. 1.

MANN, W. (1919). *The Follies and Frauds of Spiritualism*. London: Watts.

Manual for Local, Regional and National Groups (1st ed.). (1987, January). Buffalo, NY: Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal.

MARCUS, A. D. (1991, June 6). Their lawyers will all attempt to select jurors of a special bent. *Wall Street Journal*, p. B1.

M[ARTIN], J. R. (1973). Worldwide press response to Humanist Manifesto II. *Humanist, 33*(6), 4.

MATRIX, I. J. [M. GARDNER]. (1979). Martin Gardner: Defending the honor of the human mind. *Two-Year College Mathematics Journal, 10*, 227–232.

MAUSKOPF, S. H., & MCVAUGH, M. R. (1980). *The Elusive Science: Origins of Experimental Psychical Research*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

MAYHEW, J. (1985–1986, December 85/January 86). Ejected from the psychic fair. *Northwest Skeptic*, No. 9, 10–11.

MCBEATH, M. K., & THALBOURNE, M. A. (1985). Type A personality and its relationship to belief in psi. Paper presented at the Southeastern Regional Parapsychological Association Conference, February, 15, 16, Durham, NC.

MCCABE, J. (1914). *The Religion of Sir Oliver Lodge*. London: Watts.

MCCABE, J. [1920a]. *Is Spiritualism Based on Fraud? The Evidence Given by Sir A. C. Doyle and Others Drastically Examined*. London: Watts.

MCCABE, J. (1920b). *Spiritualism: A Popular History From 1847*. New York: Dodd, Mead.

MCCLENON, J. (1984). *Deviant Science: The Case of Parapsychology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

MCCLENON, J., & HYMAN, R. (1987). A remote viewing experiment conducted by a skeptic and a believer. *Zetetic Scholar*, Nos. 12 & 13, 21–33.

MCCONNELL, R. A. (1987). *Parapsychology in Retrospect: My Search for the Unicorn*. Pittsburgh, PA: Author.

MCFADDEN, D. (1981). *Austinites for Scientific Evaluation of Paranormal Claims. Minutes of Second Meeting—11/22/81*. Austin, TX.

MCFADDEN, D. (1982). *Austin Society To Oppose Pseudoscience (STOP). Minutes of Fourth Meeting 2/28/82*. Austin, TX.

MCFADDEN, D. (1983). *Austin Society to Oppose Pseudoscience (ASTOP). Minutes of the 24th Meeting (10/16/83)*. Austin, TX.

MELTON, J. G., CLARK, J., & KELLY, A. A. (1990). *New Age Encyclopedia*. Detroit, MI: Gale Research.

MEMBERS ELECT FIRST BOARD: PANEL ON MODELS A LIVELY SUCCESS.

(1988, November 1). *The Beacon* [Newsletter of the East Bay Skeptics, Berkeley, CA], *1*, 1.

MEMBERSHIP. (1986, April). *South Shore Skeptic* (Cleveland, OH), *3*, 2.

MERCIER, C. A. [1917]. *Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge*. London: Watts.

MEYER, P. (1986, March/April). Ghostboosters: The press and the paranormal. *Columbia Journalism Review, 28*, 38–41.

MITCHELL, D. (1986, February–April). First annual skeptic banquet an unqualified success. *Laser* [Los Angeles Skeptics Evaluative Report], *2*, 3–4.

MORITZ, C. (Ed.). (1988). Randi, James. *Current Biography Yearbook 1987* (pp. 454–458). New York: H. W. Wilson.

MORRIS, S. (1982, January). Interview: Martin Gardner. *Omni, 4*, 66–69, 80–86.

MOSELEY, J. W. (1965a, March). More lectures sponsored by Saucer News. *Saucer News, 12*, 19.

MOSELEY, J. W. (1965b, June). Report on our trip to Ecuador. *Saucer News, 12*, 20, 21.

MOSELEY, J. W. (1991a, May 1). *Saucer Smear, 38*, 1, 2, 5–7.

MOSELEY, J. W. (1991b, October 10). The lawsuits against James Randi (part one). *Saucer Smear, 38*, 1–3.

MURCHISON, C. (Ed.). (1927). *The Case For and Against Psychical Belief*. Worcester, MA: Clark University.

NEW ASSOCIATION TO STUDY ESP. (1975). *Parapsychology Review, 6*(4), 8.

NEW HUMANIST READERSHIP SURVEY: SATISFIED BUT AGED READERSHIP. (1990, May). *New Humanist, 105*, 17–20.

NICOLSON, C. (1974, November 5). Randi—The Houdini who didn't. *Toronto Sun* (Final Edition), p. 3.

NORTH, G. (1988). *Unholy Spirits: Occultism and New Age Humanism*. Forth Worth, TX: Dominion Press.

OBJECTIONS TO ASTROLOGY: A STATEMENT BY 186 LEADING SCIENTISTS. (1975). *Humanist, 35*(5), 4–6.

O'CONNOR, P. (1985, June–July–August). Nuts and bolts: Minutes of June 16 meeting. *South Shore Skeptic* (Cleveland, OH), *2*, 4–5.

OTTEN, A. L. (1985, July 19). People will believe anything, which is why Csicops exist. *Wall Street Journal*, pp. 1, 18.

PALMER, J. A., HONORTON, C., & UTTS, J. (1989). Reply to the National Research Council study on parapsychology. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research, 83*, 31–49.

PATTISON, K. (1991, May 31). Key West's Indiana Jones? Jim Moseley robbed/collected pre-Columbian artifacts. *Key West Citizen*, pp. 1, 12.

PINCH, T. J., & COLLINS, H. M. (1984). Private science and public knowledge: The Committee for the Scientific Investigation of the [*sic*] Claims of the Paranormal and its use of the literature. *Social Studies of Science, 14*, 521–546.

PLUMMER, M. (1989). CSICOP, groups, and spokespersons. *Skeptical Inquirer, 13,* 120–121.

POLICY ON SPONSORING RESEARCH, TESTING INDIVIDUAL CLAIMS, AND CONDUCTING INVESTIGATIONS OF ALLEGED PARANORMAL POWERS AND PHENOMENA. (1982). *Skeptical Inquirer, 6*(3), 9.

POSNER, G. P. (1978). Faulty sense of reality. *Skeptical Inquirer, 3*(2), 79.

PRATT, J. G., RHINE, J. B., SMITH, B. M., STUART, C. E., & GREENWOOD, J. A. (1940). *Extra-Sensory Perception After Sixty Years: A Critical Appraisal of the Research in Extra-Sensory Perception.* New York: Henry Holt.

PRATT-LOWE, E. L. (1985). "Where are the women"—Reprise. *Basis* [Bay Area Skeptics Information Sheet], *4*(9), 7.

PRINCE, W. F. (1930). *The Enchanted Boundary: Being a Survey of Negative Reactions to Claims of Psychic Phenomena 1820–1930.* Boston, MA: Boston Society for Psychic Research.

"PROFESSIONAL CHARLATAN" HITS CLEVELAND. (1985, May). *South Shore Skeptic* (Cleveland, OH), *2,* 1.

PSYCHICS AND SKEPTICS AT WILEY MIDDLE SCHOOL. (1985, October). *South Shore Skeptic* (Cleveland, OH), *2,* 1–2.

PUTHOFF, H. E., & TARG, R. (1977). Letter to the editor. *Psychoenergetic Systems, 2,* 173–176.

RADIN, D. I., & NELSON, R. D. (1989). Evidence for conscious-related anomalies in random physical systems. *Foundations of Physics, 19,* 1499–1514.

RANDI, J. (1980). *Flim-Flam! The Truth About Unicorns, Parapsychology, and Other Delusions.* New York: Lippincott & Crowell.

RANDI, J. (1982). *The Truth About Uri Geller* (rev. ed.). Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.

RANDI, J. (1983a). The Project Alpha experiment: Part 1. The first two years. *Skeptical Inquirer, 7*(4), 24–33.

RANDI, J. (1983b). The Project Alpha experiment: Part 2. Beyond the laboratory. *Skeptical Inquirer, 8*(1), 36–45.

RANDI, J. (1990a). The Clamart controversy. *Skeptical Inquirer, 14,* 218.

RANDI, J. (1990b). *The Mask of Nostradamus.* New York: Scribner's.

RANDI, J. (1991, May 13). Randi needs help: Open letter from James Randi [dated May 11, 1991]. *Local-Group Bulletin,* pp. 1–2.

RAO, K. R. (1984). Review of *Test Your ESP Potential: A Complete Kit with Instructions, Scorecards and Apparatus* by J. Randi. *Journal of Parapsychology, 48,* 356–358.

RAO, K. R., & PALMER, J. (1987). The anomaly called psi: Recent research and criticism. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 10,* 539–551.

RAWLINS, D. (1977). What *they* aren't telling you: Suppressed secrets of the psychic world, astrological universe, and Jeane Dixon. *Zetetic: Skeptical Inquirer, 2*(1), 62–83.

RAWLINS, D. (1981). sTARBABY. *Fate, 34*(10), 67–98.

RENNIE, J. (1991, September). Psychic *vs.* skeptic: A spoonbender sues his arch critic for libel. *Scientific American, 265,* 39–40.

RENSBERGER, B. (1975, September 3). Scientists scan astrology, find a universe of hokum. *New York Times,* pp. 1, 62.

RENSBERGER, B. (1977, August 10). Panel fears vogue for the paranormal: Scientists say belief in astrology and parapsychology may bring a society of "unreason." *New York Times,* p. A11.

RENSBERGER, B. (1978, June 25). Skeptics are scored on paranormal issue: Scholar tells scientists that occult and U.F.O. phenomena merit legitimate inquiry. *New York Times,* p. 21.

RICKARDS, R. (1986, October). You're on the air!! *South Shore Skeptic* (Cleveland, Ohio). *3,* [2–3].

RINN, J. F. (1950). *Sixty Years of Psychical Research: Houdini and I Among the Spiritualists.* New York: Truth Seeker.

ROBERTSON, M. (1984). The skeptics who debunk pseudo-science. In M. McCarthy (Ed.), *The Best of Basis 1982–1983* (p. 77). Martinez, CA: Bay Area Skeptics.

ROCKWELL, T., ROCKWELL, R., & ROCKWELL, W. T. (1978a). *The Humanist's* crusade against parapsychology: A discussion. Part Two. Context vs. meaning: A reply to Dr. Kurtz. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research, 72,* 357–364.

ROCKWELL, T., ROCKWELL, R., & ROCKWELL, W. T. (1978b). Irrational rationalists: A critique of *The Humanist's* crusade against parapsychology. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research, 72,* 23–34.

RUCKER, R. (1981, July/August). Who makes math marvelous, turns magic satin smooth, tends the looking-glass garden, and can make a winner of anyone who plays his games? *Science 81, 2,* 32–37.

SAGAN, C. (1987, February 1). The fine art of baloney detection: How not to be fooled. *Parade Magazine,* pp. 12–13.

SANDBECK, T. (1987, January). The core committee, who and why, they are. *Psientific American* [Newsletter of the Sacramento Skeptics Society], pp. 6–7.

SANDHU, R. (1990). CSICOP's campus lecture series. *Skeptical Inquirer, 15,* 28–29.

SCHEIBER, B. (1986, June–August). Dr. J. Allen Hynek (1910–1986). *Rocky Mountain Skeptic, 4,* 2.

SCHULTZ, T. (1986, Fall). Scrutinizing the paranormal: Access to skeptical books and magazines. *Whole Earth Review,* No. 52, 15–17.

SCHUMAKER, J. F. (1990). *Wings of Illusion: The Origin, Nature and Future of Paranormal Belief.* Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.

SCIENCE AND THE PARANORMAL: RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE 1975. (1975, June). *New Humanist, 91,* between pages 34 & 35. [Announcement of conference]

SCIENCE'S LITMUS TEST. (1991, March). *Harper's Magazine, 282,* 28–32.

SCIENTISTS FORM NEW COMMITTEE TO STUDY RELIGION. (1985). *Free Inquiry, 5*(3), 8.

SCS becomes affiliated with the AAAS. (1986, March–July). *Laser* [Los Angeles Skeptics Evaluative Report], *2*, 3.

SEBALD, H. (1984). New-age romanticism: The quest for an alternative lifestyle as a force of social change. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations, 11*(2), 106–127.

SECKEL, A. (1986–1987). Science, creationism, and the U.S. Supreme Court. *Skeptical Inquirer, 11*, 147–158.

SHNEOUR, E. A. (1989). The Benveniste case: A reappraisal. *Skeptical Inquirer, 14*, 91–95.

SHORE, L. A. (1989). CSICOP conference in Chicago: New light on the New Age: CSICOP's Chicago conference was the first to critically evaluate the New Age movement. *Skeptical Inquirer, 13*, 226–240.

SHORE, L. A. (1990). 1990 CSICOP conference in Washington: Skepticism in the light of scientific literacy. *Skeptical Inquirer, 15*, 3–15.

SINGER, B. (1982/83). My ordeal at Long Beach. *Free Inquiry, 3*(1), 6–10.

SPECIAL NOTE. (1988, April). *Psientific American* [Newsletter of the Sacramento Skeptics Society]. p. 1.

STALKER, D., & GLYMOUR, C. (Eds.). (1985). *Examining Holistic Medicine*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.

STEIN, G. (Ed.). (1985). *The Encyclopedia of Unbelief* (2 vols.). Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.

STEINER, R. A. (1982). No, Virginia, there is no Santa Claus. *American Atheist, 24*(12), 25–28.

STILLINGS, D. (1989). "Mistah Kurtz—he dead." Review of *Exuberance: An Affirmative Philosophy of Life* by P. Kurtz. *Artifex, 8*(4), 38.

STOKES, D. M. (1987). Promethean fire: The view from the other side. *Journal of Parapsychology, 51*, 249–270.

SULLIVAN, M. (1991, August). CSICOP eyes Dallas for 1992 convention: Special to *The Skeptic*. *The Skeptic* [Newsletter of the North Texas Skeptics], *5*, 1.

SWORDS, M. D. (1986). The 1986 CSICOP conference. *Pursuit, 19*, 84–87.

SWORDS, M. D. (1990). Using the study of anomalies to enhance critical thinking in the classroom. *Journal of Scientific Exploration, 4*(2), 123–136.

TARG, R., & PUTHOFF, H. E. (1977). *Mind-Reach: Scientists Look at Psychic Ability*. New York: Delacorte Press/Eleanor Friede.

TART, C. T. (1982a). The controversy about psi: Two psychological theories. *Journal of Parapsychology, 46*, 313–320.

TART, C. (1982b, September). Unlucky winner. *Omni, 4*, 119.

TRUZZI, M. (1983, June 16). Reflections on conjuring and psychical research. Unpublished manuscript.

TRUZZI, M. (1987). Reflections on "Project Alpha": Scientific experiment or conjuror's illusion? *Zetetic Scholar*, Nos. 12 & 13, 73–98.

TURNER SORRY FOR 'LOSERS' REMARK. (1990, June 14). *Times* [Trenton, NJ]. p. E2.

VALLEE, J. (1990). *Confrontations: A Scientist's Search for Alien Contact*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Verbatim Report of a Public Debate on "The Truth Of Spiritualism" Between Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, M.D., LL.D. (Representing Spiritualism), and Joseph McCabe (Representing the Rationalist Press Association). (1920). London: Watts.

WADE, N. (1977a). A pyrrhonian sledgehammer. *Science, 197*, 646.

WADE, N. (1977b). Schism among psychic-watchers. *Science, 197*, 1344.

WALLACE, A. F. C. (1956). Revitalization movements. *American Anthropologist, 58*, 264–281.

WALLIS, R. (1985, Summer). The origins of CSICOP. *New Humanist, 100*, 14–15.

WATERS, T. A. (1988). *The Encyclopedia of Magic and Magicians*. New York: Facts On File.

WE HEAR THAT: APS PRESENTS A HOST OF AWARDS AT SPRING MEETING IN BALTIMORE. (1989). *Physics Today, 42*(6), 95–98.

WEISBURD, S. (1991, August 12). What's beyond belief? Magazine puts startling claims, tabloid hype under close scrutiny. *Los Angeles Times*, p. B3.

WHALEY, B. (1990). *Who's Who in Magic: An International Biographical Guide From Past to Present* (Standard Edition). Oakland, CA: Jeff Busby Magic.

WHITE, J. (1979). Second thoughts: The new disciples of scientism. *Human Behavior, 8*(2), 70, 73.

Who's Who In America. (1990). 46th Edition, 1990–91. Wilmette, IL: Marquis Who's Who.

WHYTE, A. G. (1920). *The Great Ghost Illusion*. London: Watts.

WIATER, S. (1988, June). Truth's bodyguard. *Twilight Zone Magazine, 8*, 32–35, 45.

WILDER, J. S. (1988, March/April). Letter to the editor. *Rocky Mountain Skeptic, 5*, 8.

WILSON, R. A. (1986). *The New Inquisition: Irrational Rationalism and the Citadel of Science*. Phoenix, AZ: Falcon.

WINKELMAN, M. (1982). Magic: A theoretical reassessment. *Current Anthropology, 23*, 37–44.

WREN-LEWIS, J. (1974). Resistance to the study of the paranormal. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 14*(2), 41–48.

Princeton Arms North 1
Apartment 59
Cranbury, New Jersey 08512