

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Time to Celebrate!

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I've read the comments on Arthur Reber and James Alcock's (2019) criticism of Etzel Cardeña's (2018) publication in the recent issue of this Journal with great interest (Braude, 2019; Cardeña, 2019; Carr, 2019; Westcombe, 2019; B. J. Williams, 2019; G. R. Williams, 2019), and also another recent comment on the same matter (Roe, 2019). The authors of these articles convincingly highlight numerous weaknesses, inconsistencies, and untenable claims in the publication of Reber and Alcock, the most outrageous being the latter's postulate that (even huge amounts of) data must be regarded irrelevant and be ignored by scientists if they question subjective preconceptions about what is possible and impossible in nature. Clearly, if mankind would have behaved in accordance with Reber and Alcock's proposition, we would still be living on a flat earth and believe that the sun and planets circle around us. Science as we know it wouldn't exist. It goes without saying that rationally minded people cannot endorse Reber and Alcock's paradoxical and downright anti-scientific stance.

Consequently and righteously, Chris Roe depicted current skepticism as being in an "egregious state" (Roe, 2019). Whereas Roe regrets this situation because the poverty of modern skeptical criticism would prevent constructive discussions to improve the reliability and validity of parapsychological research, and would ultimately do a disservice to parapsychology, there is also an alternative, or perhaps complementary, perspective that entails seeing things more positively: When the best move that high-profile skeptics like Alcock can make in response to Cardeña's (2018) publication is seeking refuge in

advocating desperate anti-scientific propaganda, the small community of parapsychologists has apparently done a truly great job already! And so it seems that experimental parapsychological research in recent decades has reached a state in which the only option left for year-long skeptics is proclaiming a position that signifies intellectual bankruptcy. This highlights an important and so far neglected aspect of Reber and Alcock's paper, but which should nevertheless be stressed:

Parapsychologists need to be deeply grateful to Reber and Alcock for their unexpected support. If serious parapsychological research is to gain increased acceptance among scientists, this will best be achieved through a process in which neutral and open-minded people will increasingly recognize that even prominent skeptics' arguments are simply unsound. Hence, I not only agree with Bernard Carr (2019) that Reber and Alcock's publication should be compulsory reading for all students of parapsychology, but I'd love to see it being carefully studied by students of all branches of empirical and theoretical science along with Cardeña's (2018, 2019) publications (and ideally, along with some of the other comments). This comparison exemplifies astonishingly different levels of scientific accountability in leading parapsychologists and leading skeptics, and, thus, Reber and Alcock's paper is quite uplifting for parapsychology—notwithstanding that typical proponents of mainstream thinking remain at present hardly affected by the paper's stumpiness and that the journal *American Psychologist* even denied Cardeña a right to respond (Cardeña, 2019). The bottom line, however, is that the “Reber-Alcock incident” is a triumph for experimental parapsychologists. It illustrates two things:

1. Even renowned skeptics provide written proof that they have run out of scientific and rational arguments by now.
2. Parapsychologists are clearly on the right track.

If I include myself here, this means: We can continue our work with renewed motivation, verve, rigor, and pride. Well then, let the corks pop!

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