

able (Herrnstein) and thus social welfare programs are a waste of money (Murray).

Academics are still battling over the first, but as of this writing, the second has been decided. The only issue to be determined is how many of the welfare programs are to be gutted. School lunches this year, child-labor laws next. Perhaps even giraffe hunting will become mandatory. In the meanwhile, undeterred by infections, Becky continues her conquest of things physical in her school designated for the "gifted and talented" despite her great grandparents' inability to speak English or afford a bike, skates, or music lessons.

*Paul Alper*  
*University of St. Thomas*  
*St. Paul, MN 55105-1096*

**Guidelines for Testing Psychic Claimants** by Richard Wiseman & Robert L. Morris. (College Lane, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, England AL10 9AB): University of Hertfordshire Press, 1995. 72 pp. (p), £7. ISBN 0-900458-58-5.

Parapsychology has been plagued for years by criticisms of supposedly poorly-controlled experiments and experimenter gullibility when working with gifted subjects. *Guidelines for Testing Psychic Claimants* by Richard Wiseman and Robert Morris explores means for correcting these weaknesses and offers suggestions for future research. Although this book contains less than 56 pages of actual text, it does provide the reader with valuable advice.

The strong point of *Guidelines* lies in the chapters dealing with formal studies of psi and recommendations for reporting these experiments. The authors offer sound methodology for testing ESP and Macro-PK and detail possible scenarios for cheating by the purportedly gifted subject. Wiseman and Morris strongly suggest that the experimenter acquire knowledge of the conjuring arts or consult with magicians when designing protocols or evaluating the claimants' abilities.

The issue of control is highlighted both demonstrably and experimentally in Chapter 6 dealing with Formal Studies. The authors caution that allowing a claimant to control the environment and protocol enables the claimant to 'control' the experiment in his favor. However, strictly adhering to an established protocol may lead the subject to claim inability to perform under such adverse conditions. In these situations, Wiseman and Morris explain, it is vital to develop good communication between experimenter and claimant and, equally important, to record the negotiation process. Another important tip is to require claimants to sign a form stating that they will not cheat during any of the experimental sessions. Although a simple suggestion, this is also a valuable one.

Criticisms of earlier experiments involving psychic claimants focused on the insufficient information provided by the authors of subsequent reports.

Lack of general information and of specific details of protocol, environment, and controls has allowed critics to attack the experiments regardless of their outcome. Chapter 7 of *Guidelines* addresses the issue of experimental reporting by stressing the need to record all conversations, protocols, environments and results in as many ways as possible. Verbatim transcripts should also be included in the final report. The reliability of the evidence is tantamount to the strength of the experiment and can be preserved by use of video and audio recordings as well as photographic inventory of the environment.

This book is well written and offers to experimenters advice of quality about designing and carrying out investigations of psychic claimants. However, the reader may very well walk away from this book with a hunger for more detailed information regarding previous experiments and issues alluded to in most chapters. The authors state in the conclusion (Chapter 9), "It is hoped that future versions of the manual will include these and many other interesting issues." That would bolster the information already addressed and provide the reader with a full meal of details to replace the tantalizing snack the authors provide. In the present edition, Appendix A lists some general reading in parapsychology, on experimental design in psychology, other specific texts on testing psychic claimants, consideration of some past investigations, and books on conjuring and psychic fraud. There are also addresses where relevant literature is available and for relevant periodicals. Appendix B gives some more useful addresses, of organizations for parapsychology and for conjuring.

*Jannine M. Rebrnan*

*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

**The Astonishing Hypothesis: The Scientific Search for the Soul** by Francis Crick. London: Simon & Schuster, 1994, 318 pp. \$16.99 ISBN 0-671-71295-0.

Francis Crick is one of the preeminent scientists of this century who, in 1962, was awarded, with James Watson, the Nobel Prize for his contribution to the decipherment of the genetic code. Now, at the age of 79, working in La Jolla, California, he has turned his attention to that most complex of all objects in the universe, the human brain. The problem he has set himself is to ascertain what specifically goes on in the brain when we are said to be conscious. Or, rather, since he admits that would be too vast a problem, what specifically goes on when we are aware of some object in our field of vision. This book, which is dedicated to Christof Koch, his younger colleague at Caltech, offers a tentative solution.

The book is divided into three parts followed by an epilogue in which he discusses the philosophical implications of what he is trying to do. Part I, which deals with the experimental psychology of vision, presents no special difficulties and is well and amply illustrated with appropriate figures and illusions.