

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### **A Recent Instance of Psi Censorship in Psychological Science?**

Cardena (2015) has provided an important and timely service by voicing his concerns about past and present censorship in science in general, and of psi in particular. Coincidentally, I had just experienced an apparent instance of censorship in *Psychological Science*. Thanks to Cardena propitiously sharing this article with his peers, I was inspired to write this brief Letter to the Editor and summarize the circumstances of my recent experience with the hope that this kind of suppressive practice can be addressed more openly. At some point, mainstream science should own up to this unfair censoring tactic concerning challenging and controversial research in science in general and psi research in particular.

What would you conclude from the following?

1. You submitted a multi-blinded article involving claimant evidential mediums to a major journal, and you explicitly acknowledged the innovative and controversial nature of the research.
2. The editor wrote back and said “*I do not perceive your evidence as persuasive.*” No explanation was provided. The manuscript was rejected by the editor, and therefore was not sent out for extended reviewer comments.
3. You wrote back to the editor and indicated that this terse sentence was subjective and vague. You requested that the editor provide a brief paragraph or two explaining how he reached this decision.
4. The editor wrote back and said no. He stated he would not provide an “*extended explanation.*” He said this was his choice about how he would “*invest his limited time.*”
5. You wrote back to the editor explaining your history of prior positive experiences in working with editors at the journal *Science*. You requested that since he was this busy, that he reconsider sending the paper out for extended reviews which could confirm (or disconfirm) his seemingly vague subjective impressions.
6. The editor wrote back and said “*Sorry, Dr. Schwartz, but no.*”

7. You wrote back to the editor and asked him if he was sure about this decision, explaining that some people might interpret this as evidence of bias or prejudice about the research area.
8. The editor made the choice to not respond to this email.

Is there reason to question the editor's motive in this instance, especially since *Psychological Science* has historically never published any research involving psi?

The issue here is not whether the design of this specific experiment allowed a completely unambiguous conclusion. What matters is whether *Psychological Science* evidenced apparent content bias in its consideration of this research (a detailed account is available from the author upon request).

Journals such as the *Journal of Scientific Exploration* and *EXPLORE: The Journal of Science and Healing* were created to provide a more open forum for exploratory and visionary science. The new website <http://www.opensciences.org>, formed in response to the 2014 International Summit for Post-Materialist Science, Spirituality, and Society co-organized by Gary Schwartz and Mario Beauregard from the University of Arizona and Lisa Miller from Columbia University (see Beauregard, Schwartz, Miller, et al. 2014), is attempting to foster the kind of scientific openness and integrity expressed by Cardena (2015).

Maybe it is time for scientists experiencing potential censorship to come forward and share the details of what has transpired in their specific situations. Though science is ultimately a self-correcting process, humanity suffers when scientists are given free rein to base the sharing of theories and research entirely on their personal perceptions of persuasiveness.

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### References Cited

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- Beauregard, B., Schwartz, G. E., Miller, L., Dossey, L., Moreira-Almeida, A., Schlitz, M., Sheldrake, R., & Tart, C. (2014). Manifesto for a post-materialist science. *EXPLORE: The Journal of Science and Healing*, 10(5):272–274.