

# WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Has classic skepticism run its course?

*by Daniel Loxton, 2007*

FANTASY AND SCI-FI FANS MAY RECALL an Emmy Award-nominated musical episode of the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, in which the heroes sadly sing lyrics posing the key existential question:

*The battle's done, and we kinda won  
So we sound our victory cheer.  
Where do we go from here?*<sup>1</sup>

Looking around the skeptics movement over the last few years, it's seemed to me that everyone is asking this same question. I'd like to suggest an answer: we should return to basics.

When skeptics first organized, the landscape was in some ways very different. Pseudoscientific fads that have since faded back somewhat into the fringe — from Uri Geller to flying saucers to Von Däniken's ancient astronauts — were then sweeping the culture. “When we founded CSICOP in 1976,” Paul Kurtz recently wrote, “we were concerned with the proliferation of paranormal claims in the media that were unexamined by scientific investigators.”<sup>2</sup>

At the time, paranormal fads could rise and flourish unchallenged. Scientists had little appetite for investigating such silliness, and media had nowhere to turn for expertise or critical evaluation of paranormal claims. It was a free ride for quacks and con men, and a recipe for accumulating mistaken beliefs.

In an important sense, my skeptical heroes “kinda won” this battle: they built a network of expert

organizations to whom media could turn; they published an extensive body of literature probing the validity of pseudoscientific assertions; they engaged in watchdog activism; they tracked the evolution of claims and contributed to the scientific understanding of belief and anomalous experience.

This took no small effort. Skeptical leaders like Randi, Kurtz and Shermer have racked up heroic mileage, and no shortage of bumps and bruises along the way. And, for some skeptical trailblazers, at long last, the battle's finally done. Some of the early titans, like Martin Gardener, have retired. Others, like Asimov and Sagan, have passed away.

Still others are just sick of this crap.

After all, in a world where Peter Popoff can once again make a sweet fortune performing miracles — Popoff, for heaven's sake! — what's the point in fighting so hard? It's the much lamented “unsinkable rubber duck” problem. Expose a magic golf ball-finding device, and that exact same worthless device reappears instantly with a new name. Expose a con man — even reveal him, caught deliciously red-handed, on the *Tonight Show*, in front of millions of witnesses — and he barely misses a beat.<sup>3</sup>

If scam artists are moving targets and paranormal believers are impossible to convince, where does that leave the skeptics movement? Here we are at the crossroads. In what direction are we supposed to carry the baton?

I'd like to suggest that we carry it full circle.

## Where do we go from here?

In the summer of 2006, Martin Rundkvist (one of the editors of the Swedish skeptics magazine *Folkvett*) tackled this question in his blog. The entry's title, "Stuffy Inquirer," captured his thesis: the *Skeptical Inquirer* "appears to be written by old men for old men." According to Rundkvist, "there's something lacking" in both the tone and the content. (Personally, I disagree — I love the *Skeptical Inquirer*.) He wrote, "A lot of the articles in S.I. seem to be about hoaxes and 'mysteries' current when I was a kid. Uri Geller is still very much an ongoing concern in S.I. And in the current issue they discuss Central American crystal skulls again!"<sup>4</sup>

Rundkvist represents a strong current among readers of skeptical magazines: many folks are positively sick to death of hearing about the old chestnuts. The pressure is on, with sentiments running along the lines, "Enough already, we know there's no Bigfoot. What else have you got?"

It sounds to me like the editors of the *Skeptical Inquirer* are feeling this keenly. Paul Kurtz wrote recently that the "steady decline in the reading of magazines ... has eroded the financial base of the *Skeptical Inquirer*; and we do not see any easy solution to the deficit gap that increasingly imperils our survival."<sup>5</sup>

Kurtz also appears personally to share an all-too-common exhaustion with the core paranormal concerns of skepticism. "In my view," he now says, "we cannot limit our agenda to the issues that were dominant thirty, twenty, or even ten years ago, interesting as they have been."<sup>6</sup> Paranormal topics "have been" interesting, but as Rundkvist suggested, are interesting no longer. Although hastening to add "we should of course continue to investigate paranormal claims, given our skilled expertise in that area," Kurtz is of the opinion that "we need to widen our net by entering new arenas we've never touched on before..."<sup>7</sup>

This change of mission has even been formalized. Early this year, the *Skeptical Inquirer* carried the announcement that the organization that publishes it, CSICOP (the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal), has changed its name to CSI (the Committee for Skeptical Inquiry).<sup>8</sup> This blander (if also more manageable) title implies that the paranormal is no longer the central concern of the organization.

Addressing this change, *Skeptical Inquirer* editor Kendrick Frazier explained, "our underlying interest has never

been the paranormal per se, but larger topics and issues such as how our beliefs in such things arise, how our minds work to deceive us, how we think, how our critical thinking capabilities can be improved ... and so on and on."<sup>9</sup> Yet it's clear that this change is seen as part of a move to a "new skepticism," as Kurtz put it. Kurtz asserts that CSICOP "has reached an historic juncture: the recognition that there is a critical need to change our direction."<sup>10</sup>

In one sense (as Kurtz recognizes), this "broadening" of skepticism is neither new nor novel. With the birth of *Skeptic* magazine in the early 1990s, Michael Shermer opened all manner of fringe science, pseudoscientific and pseudohistorical claims to skeptical scrutiny. If it's weird, and testable in principle, then it's fair game. Likewise, the *Skeptical Inquirer* has featured articles on political or general science topics such as cyberterrorism, distributed electricity generation, and the 9/11 tragedy.

## What are we doing here?

All this raises the question: what is the skeptical movement *for*? What are we trying to accomplish, exactly?

Skeptics have never been entirely comfortable neck deep in the paranormal. The association is embarrassing for many people. As Kendrick Frazier mentioned in his discussion of the new CSI title, "the word 'paranormal' in the name of CSICOP ... always required an explanation that we weren't the promoters of the paranormal but the scientific investigators, the critical evaluators." Furthermore, he wrote, "many academics and others just didn't want to be associated at all with anything with the paranormal in its name, no matter the context."<sup>11</sup>

(I know I feel self-conscious reading a magazine on the bus if it has psychics or UFOs or Bigfoot on the cover.)

I gave a lecture in 1999 in which I addressed this discomfort: "People who are already trained to conduct themselves skeptically sometimes wonder why the skeptical movement gets so intertwined with areas they consider silly and peripheral, like the paranormal." I suggested several reasons why it was important for skeptics to pay close, open-minded, critical attention to the paranormal — including the off chance that some minority of paranormal claims could turn out to be true. (After all, if the aliens are really invading, or if people sometimes burst into flame for no good reason, then these would be things of uncommon importance of which to become aware.)

Yet, it's amply clear that most of the old paranormal chestnuts are never going to pay off. We looked, and they're not true. As Michael Shermer told an interviewer not long ago, "I can't stand to do one more article on 'Bigfoot: Is It Real?' No, it isn't. Okay, so can we move on to the next thing now?"<sup>12</sup>

Indeed, the need to discipline ourselves to keep looking at these hokey, dusty ideas, again and again, as though they could revolutionize science is a major cause of the exhaustion skeptics feel. Susan Blackmore, announcing in 2001 that she had given up on research into paranormal subjects, went on to explain why: "the real reason is that I am just too tired — tired, above all, of working to maintain an open mind. I couldn't dismiss all those extraordinary claims out of hand. After all, they just might be true, and if they were then whole swathes of science would have to be rewritten."<sup>13</sup>

When do you give up on a given paranormal notion? After a dozen fundamentally identical haunted house investigations reveal nothing supernatural or new? A hundred remote viewing experiments? A thousand psychic healing cases? No wonder people throw up their hands and walk away.

And no wonder skeptical readers and leaders want to "widen the net" to include new topics drawn from general science or (as Kurtz suggests) "biogenetic engineering, religion, economics, ethics, and politics."<sup>14</sup>

But I would like to suggest something quite different: I submit that it is a mistake for the skeptical movement to broaden our focus still further.

Tired or not, I'd like to call for a renewed focus on our core mission.

## The Big Picture

In my view, there are two proper areas of focus for skeptics. One is *the promotion of science literacy and critical thinking* (often using the paranormal as a pedagogical tool). The other is *consumer protection in fringe science areas* — in particular, as regards paranormal claims.

Regarding science literacy, we all know the stakes — yet, can we remind ourselves too often? In Sagan's (still spine-tingling) articulation,

*We've arranged a global civilization in which most crucial elements... profoundly depend on science and technology. We have also arranged things so that almost no one understands science and technology. This is a prescription for disaster.*<sup>15</sup>

That really says it all. The kids in schools today (and the adults reading magazines) are called upon to navigate unimaginably vast challenges, in which millions (even billions) of lives hang in the balance. Climate change, peak oil production, dwindling water supplies, the human population peak, unprecedented demographic trends, soaring antibiotic resistance in disease organisms, the AIDS-driven crippling of entire nations — my children will see all of it, and they'll have tough choices to make. Those problems are all science problems, and every citizen desperately needs the factual background and cognitive tools required to help solve them.

Many skeptics, like Sagan, are explicit that this is the real point of what we do. CSICOP Fellow Bill Nye recently suggested that science advocacy "wouldn't matter if we didn't have global heating, if the world weren't going to end for many, many humans unless we take a scientifically literate view, and take scientifically informed steps to save the planet for our own species."<sup>16</sup>

It's hard to argue with that. The stakes really are *that* high; science literacy and critical thinking, of the types promoted by skeptics, are *that* important.

Framing skeptical activism in terms of global challenges and vast human consequences certainly helps communicate the importance of our project. As I've often said myself, to family, to friends, or to the press, "If you can save a grieving widow from being taken advantage of by a callous con-man, that's a good in itself. But really, the stakes are bigger than that. Really, it's about the global science and technology issues facing our culture..."

But today I would like to argue almost the opposite:

## The paranormal

Sure enough, the big picture, global issues are where the stakes are highest. But I submit that the attention and energy of the skeptical movement should remain sharply focused on consumer protection in fringe science areas.

In particular, we should renew our focus on the investigation and criticism of paranormal claims. Here's why:

- 1 People get hurt.
- 2 No one else does anything about it.

## Consumer protection

In my view, consumer protection is the most foundational function of the skeptics movement: we investigate, report on, and promote awareness about products which are generally ineffective, sometimes dangerous, and occasionally deadly — and which no other watchdog group bothers to research.

That work is important. And it's hard. We're under-funded, we're overwhelmed, and it's often hard to see the stakes. Who cares about yet another distasteful little scam?

Yet, *somebody has to do it*. I can't drive that point home hard enough. The job isn't done. It will never be done. The need for this work has not diminished just because we grew sick of doing it.

*People have no less need to hear the message just because we grew tired of saying it.*

## What's changed?

The skeptical movement was conceived to address an important and specific consumer protection problem. As *Skeptical Inquirer* editor Kendrick Frazier explains, "our original core focus on the 'paranormal' was partly because that was where a lot of misinformation and intentional disinformation existed. Also, paranormal topics had broad appeal to the public and the media, and the scientific community was basically ignoring them, allowing promoters of the paranormal to go unchallenged."

What's changed?

Today, it is still emphatically the case that paranormal beliefs are widespread. The notion that the traditional paranormal topics are dead issues flies in the face of the fact that (according to Gallup in 2005) three quarters of Americans believe at least one claim from a list of ten classic paranormal ideas.<sup>17</sup> For skeptics, some of these ten claims from yesteryear seem just too resoundingly and thoroughly debunked to waste another sentence on; yet, millions of Americans accept them today.

Asked, for example, whether they "believe in," "don't believe," "are not sure about," or have "no opinion" regarding "Astrology, or that the position of the stars and planets can affect people's lives," fully 25 percent of Americans say they "believe in" astrology. For those keeping count, that's 75 million astrology believers in the US alone. Can it really be that this number isn't vast enough to be worth our time? (As a Canadian, I can't help notice that that's much more than twice the population of my country.) Similar numbers are still convinced that clairvoyants can see the future, or that extraterrestrials have visited the Earth.

The numbers get worse. Haunted houses are accepted by a whopping 37 percent of the population, while a stunning 42 percent believe in possession by the devil.

Still worse, many paranormal beliefs have risen right before our eyes. Several of the items Gallup tracks have grown dramatically since 1990, especially those connected with the spirit medium revival.

## Wait, it gets even worse!

Leaving these Gallup findings aside, it's painfully clear that certain other paranormal beliefs — "Intelligent Design" creationism and homeopathy, for example — have enjoyed explosive, stratospheric growth on our watch.

Homeopathy is my favorite example. I'm just 32 years old, yet I can personally remember when homeopathy was (quite rightly) an obscure, fringe notion. Yet, if you were to ask a busload of people today whether they thought there was probably something to homeopathy, I bet almost every hand would go up. It's everywhere now, an accepted commonplace. My veterinarian sells homeopathic preparations with a straight face, as do the pharmacies in my neighborhood. My midwife recommended a homeopathic product to my wife to induce labor. (Now, other mothers and parenting

magazines constantly recommend homeopathic potions for teething and similar complaints.)

How on Earth did that load of magic hogwash become accepted so universally, from suburban homes to news networks, from corporate boardrooms to the halls of Congress?

For all that it's been branded otherwise, homeopathy is an utterly magical, literally "paranormal" claim. Further, it fails miserably to do what it promises. And, on top of it all, its central claims are flat-out hilarious on their face. Homeopathy is made up of Bizarro World notions (such as the idea that halving the dose doubles the potency) that would seem silly even to a child.

How did something so high on with the preposterousness scale achieve such wide cultural acceptance, such (and this is more to the point) deep market penetration? That's a major loss of ground for skeptics since the 1970s, a loss of ground even since the dawn of the 21st Century.

The answer is simple: homeopathy, packaged along with the other "alternative medicine" modalities, out-marketed its critics. I'd like to suggest that this explosive success necessarily means *we skeptics screwed up*. An organized paranormal lobby, a magical marketing machine, utterly kicked our collective asses. Of course, they had much more money than we did. But I think it is true by definition that *we should have been paying much more attention to homeopathy* — not less.

There remains a huge public need for skeptics to tackle homeopathy and keep tackling it. Think what just that one paranormal idea costs our society. It drains huge resources, entirely pointlessly, from state-run health care; it further increases the cost of private health care; it strains yet more the resources of the sick and the poor. And it has literally deadly implications. For example, during recent undercover research in the UK, 100 percent of homeopaths were willing to provide at-risk travelers with a worthless homeopathic remedy as an "alternative" to effective malaria prevention drugs.

That's ethically loathsome: the sale of *nothing at all*, presented as efficacious medicine. It makes my skin crawl.

Clearly, that one passé topic remains a huge deal all by itself. Just homeopathy alone deserves a focused, fully engaged activist watchdog group.

There are dozens, even hundreds of paranormal and pseudoscientific topics each deserve vigilant watchdogs of their own.

And like it or not, we're all we've got.

## Sharks

Thirty years after the founding of the skeptical movement, it's also still the case that vicious sharks cruise the paranormal waters, knowingly selling false hopes, fake medicines, and bogus products. This is a fact beyond any dispute; after all, such people have often been caught red-handed.

I don't think this point can be over-emphasized: there are real live bad guys out there in the paranormal world, folks who harm people — and profit from it. Persuasion criminals posing as mediums callously, intentionally exploit the anguish of grieving mothers, and molest the memories of dead loved ones. Psychic vultures flock to the families of missing persons, sending police on wild goose chases for their own notoriety and profit. Scam artists entice the elderly to invest their life savings in perpetual motion machines. Unethical businessmen happily peddle untested, unsafe, or fake medicines. Among confidence men, the very worst monsters take money to *pretend outright* to treat the sick.

What could be nastier, more despicable, more deserving of outrage? Any person of conscience should feel sickened by such practices. Sickened and angry.

Yet no one does anything much about any of it — no one but us even tries.

Law enforcement is still virtually powerless against frauds and confidence games. Mainstream media still generally give paranormal claimants a free ride. (In some respects, the existence of skeptical spokespersons enables this: having "both sides of the story" allows journalists to dodge the responsibility to evaluate the claims they publicize.) Scientists still have better things to do than investigate outlandish or supernatural claims. (As Smithsonian primatologist John Napier amusingly put it, in reference to Bigfoot, "There are no shortage of problems to tackle, and it is not surprising that scientists prefer to investigate the probable rather than beat their heads against the wall of the faintly possible."<sup>18</sup>)

That leaves us, or no one at all.



## The paranormal who we are

CSICOP's Ben Radford once shared with me his rock-bottom reason for thinking we should keep our focus on the paranormal: "It's who we are."

Reviewing the 2005 Skeptics Society conference at CalTech, *Slate* magazine's Daniel Engber reminisced that, "In 1976, Kurtz formed the Committee for the Scientific Inquiry Into Claims of the Paranormal to explain, expose, dispel, and debunk the supernatural and all its practitioners. For decades, CSICOP's members did all of that with fierce passion. But in recent years the skeptics' enthusiasm for debunking has begun to subside."<sup>19</sup>

Engber asked, "Why have the skeptics grown so dreary? Their tactics have changed to reflect a new set of targets." As our attention drifts away to culture war issues like stem cell research, he supposed, "A tedious battle against the modern bugaboos of religion and politics demands tedious tactics..."

When James Randi finally took the stage, "he seemed almost retro," according to Engber. Yet, Randi's thundering wake-up call to the audience, crying out against the wicked practices of fake faith healers ("scoundrels" who "need to be behind bars") brought a wildly enthusiastic response from the crowd.

As Engber reflected, "the fervent response to Randi's tirade suggests a deep-seated nostalgia for old-fashioned debunking."

But I think it's more important than nostalgia. As the movement looks for its new direction, skeptics face a choice: be who we are, do what we do best — or arrive late to someone else's party and try to act like them.

No one else does what we do. We are the world experts on the paranormal, pseudoscience, and critical thinking. Moreover, that expertise is vitally needed. But *many* people engage in general science coverage, and it is not at all clear that we can make major contributions along that well-tread path. Some of our elders in the popular science realm, like *Scientific American*, have a lead over us that can be measured in *centuries*.

## Libertarianism, Humanism & Atheism

Then, there are those who would change the soul of skepticism.

Some would be delighted to see skepticism linked to libertarianism. In my opinion, that would be a catastrophic mistake. A politically aligned, partisan skepticism (even a skepticism *perceived* as political) is crippled, its scientific credibility destroyed. *We are a lobby for unbiased, evidence-based reasoning itself.* Any political leaning, any hint of systematic bias, and we may as well pack up our toys and go home.

Besides, there are many skeptics, including myself, who don't have the time of day for libertarianism. For every Penn Jillette there is an Isaac Asimov (whose derisive definition of libertarianism was "I want the liberty to grow rich and you can have the liberty to starve").

It is an issue as divisive as it is peripheral, and it's pure poison for us as a movement.

Likewise, there are those who would prefer to subsume skepticism under the heading of secular humanism, or strongly link skepticism to atheism. I'm both an atheist and a secular humanist, but it is clear to me that atheism is an albatross for the skeptical movement. It divides us, it distracts us, and it marginalizes us.

Frankly, we can't afford that. We need all the help we can get.

Even more to the point, skepticism is *not* humanism, nor atheism, nor libertarianism. Individual skeptics may or may not agree about any given belief or portfolio of beliefs, about religion or politics or ethics or anything else — that's all neither here nor there. What unifies us is a commitment to a way of finding out, not a set of conclusions. We're here to promote methodological doubt and the other tools of scientific inquiry.

## Winning isn't the point

But if the paranormal and its proponents are unsinkable rubber ducks, what is the point of fighting? Why waste our time?

It's true that "winning" is not a realistic goal — not winning in any absolute sense. But it is a false dichotomy to suggest that anything short of eradicating the paranormal is a waste of our time.

Thankfully, it *is* possible to make *progress*. The assertion that pseudoscience will always exist is no doubt true, but it is a trivial observation. (Disease will always exist, but that does not mean we should close the medical schools.) The persistence of paranormal belief should not distract us from the truth that skeptics can make progress in this area, on three important indices:

- **PREVENTION:** we can decrease the total number (and scale) of scams and confusions;
- **HARM REDUCTION:** We can reduce the total amount of harm suffered by victims and potential victims;
- **JUSTICE:** we can make things less profitable or more difficult for *specific* scam artists.

Think of muggings. Despite the best efforts of police forces the world over, some violent muggings continue to happen. Mugging may be an unsinkable rubber duck, but it is still the case that *somebody* should show up, someone should take notice, when you are robbed. The fact that additional crimes will occur in the future is an irrelevance; it does nothing to negate the goodness of trying to reduce the number of muggings; nor should it stop us from trying to punish the person who mugged you; nor does it alter our ethical obligation to help current victims of crime.

## If romance is what it takes...

Yet, for all that, many skeptics still find it discouraging that the same dumb crap just keeps coming up.

Let's suppose that the cynics are right (they aren't), and no large-scale progress can ever be made in the skeptical project (which, in fact, it can).

In my view, *trying* would still be an ethical imperative. It's the right thing to do, and that's all.

If I may be forgiven a second *Buffy*-related analogy, I've privately thought of this as my "*Angel* theory of skepticism." In a spin-off TV series, the fictional *Angel* — a vampire superhero with a soul — must fight to atone for the evil deeds he committed during centuries as a sadistic undead monster. Questions haunt the series: When is the debt paid? When is salvation achieved? When does the fight end? As the series reaches its conclusion, the answer becomes clear: the battle has no end, the hero is never off the hook, winning is not the point. What matters is simply that *someone tries to do something*.

Skeptics have the privilege and burden of knowing that wrongs are going unchallenged, wrongs no one else cares about (or even recognizes). That knowledge places on us an ethical responsibility to do whatever we can.

It's exactly this resolute sense of personal responsibility that I admire so deeply in skeptics like James Randi.

In 1997, the first issue of the James Randi Educational Foundation's newsletter *Swift* appeared as a bound-in section within *Skeptic* magazine. The cover of that *Skeptic* depicts Randi in armor, standing over a slain dragon. He's never stopped fighting, before or since — progress or not, discouragement or not.

I couldn't help thinking of that *Skeptic* cover during the very last line spoken during the TV series *Angel*. Beaten, cornered, exhausted, the surviving heroes turn to face an overwhelming, undefeatable army of demons and mythical monsters. One character calmly asks if there's a plan for how to conduct their hopelessly outnumbered last stand. *Angel* replies, "Well, personally, I kinda want to slay the dragon. Let's go to work."

I suspect some readers would object to such a romantic interpretation of our situation. I can only point out that we *are* hopelessly outnumbered, and we absolutely cannot win — not in any ultimate sense. Paranormal scams will continue to happen, while evidence-based reasoning frequently won't. Media sources will continue to exploit our fears and hopes, and some people will continue to mislead others for money and power. Don't kid yourself.

If it takes romanticism to keep us engaged, I say bring it on. Whatever it takes to keep us fighting, keep us from just giving up and walking away.

We can't win any ultimate victory over superstition or ignorance, but we can do a lot of good if we fight hard enough.

## Postscript – the future

At the Amazing Meeting 5 conference, CSICOP's Ben Radford told me about some of the outside projects he'd love to pursue. "I've been doing this paranormal investigation stuff a long time," he said. "I don't know how many more years I can keep it up."

Burnout is a problem he faces, and it's certainly a problem our heroes — folks who've been hammering the same damn Whack-a-Moles for *decades* — face every day. This is why the continuous emergence of new voices in skepticism is so important, and why it's so promising a sign that new leaders are emerging all the time.

We need everybody — young people, fledgling activists, the silently outraged, those who don't know where to start — to stand up and be counted.

There's burden enough to go around. Even our heroes need students, helpers — even, one day, heirs. Newbie enthusiasm is no kind of substitute for knowledge, experience and expertise, but it's something of value in its own right. If skepticism is a Sisyphean task, then we will always need more people who are enthusiastic about rolling rocks.

Or, to put it another way:

We will always need people who still want their chance to slay the dragon.

Let's go to work.



## Notes

- 1 Whedon, Joss. 2002. "Where Do We Go From Here?" *Once More With Feeling*. Sarah Michelle Gellar, Anthony Stewart Head, and chorus. Rounder Records.
- 2 Kurtz, Paul. 2007. "New Directions for Skeptical Inquiry." *Skeptical Inquirer*, 31, no. 1, p. 7. Available online at <http://www.csicop.org/specialarticles/skeptical-inquiry.html> (October 11, 2007.)
- 3 For a concise historical recap of James Randi's exposé of Peter Popoff and an update on Popoff's new ministry, see "A Profitable Prophet." *Inside Edition*, February 27, 2007. Available online at <http://www.randi.org/insideeditionpopoff.html> (October 11, 2007.)
- 4 Rundkvist, Martin. 2006, July 5. "Stuffy Inquirer." *Salto Sobrius*. <http://saltosobrius.blogspot.com/2006/07/stuffy-inquirer.html> (October 11, 2007.)
- 5 Kurtz, Paul. 2006. "Science and the Public: Summing Up Thirty Years of the *Skeptical Inquirer*." *Skeptical Inquirer*, 30, no. 5, p. 19. Available online at <http://www.csicop.org/si/2006-05/si.html> (October 11, 2007.)
- 6 Kurtz. 2006. p. 19
- 7 Kurtz. 2006. p. 19
- 8 Frazier, Kendrick. 2007. "It's CSI Now, Not CSICOP." *Skeptical Inquirer*, 31, no. 1, p. 5. Available online at <http://www.csicop.org/specialarticles/csicop.html> (October 11, 2007.)
- 9 Frazier. 2007. p. 6.
- 10 Kurtz. 2007. p. 7.
- 11 Frazier. 2007. p. 6.
- 12 Hudgins, Ed. 2007, January-February. "TNI's Interview with Michael Shermer." *The New Individualist*. [http://www.objectivistcenter.org/ct-1852-M\\_Shermer.aspx](http://www.objectivistcenter.org/ct-1852-M_Shermer.aspx) (October 11, 2007.)
- 13 Blackmore, Susan. 2001. "Giving Up the Ghosts: End of a Personal Quest." *Skeptical Inquirer*, 25, no. 2, p. 25.
- 14 Kurtz. 2006. p. 19
- 15 Sagan, Carl. 1997. *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark*. New York: Ballantine Books. p. 26
- 16 Grothe, D.J. 2006, April 1. "Bill Nye: Changing the World with Science Education." *Point of Inquiry*. Available online at <http://www.pointofinquiry.org/?p=46> (October 11, 2007.)
- 17 Moore, David. 2005, June 16. "Three in Four Americans Believe in Paranormal." <http://home.sandiego.edu/~baber/logic/gallup.html> (October 11, 2007.)
- 18 Napier, John. 1973. *Bigfoot: the Yeti and Sasquatch in Myth and Reality*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. p. 15.
- 19 Engber, Daniel. 2005, June 22. "Remember Flim-Flam: How to be a Modern Skeptic." *Slate*. <http://slate.com/id/2121239/> (October 11, 2007.)