

Private Science and Public Knowledge: The Committee for the Scientific Investigation of the Claims of the Paranormal and its Use of the Literature

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CORRIGENDUM

Abstract

The scientific literature can be used to construct facts or to deconstruct them. The formal journals construct by presenting maximally 'demodalized' accounts of experiment. The more popular journals are licensed to present more than this, but usually, where they do provide contingent details of scientists' work, these are details of life away from the laboratory bench. Sometimes, popular journals use their license to present contingent details of work at the laboratory bench, and this has a deconstructing effect on the scientific results presented. This analysis emerges from a consideration of the role of the literature from an active 'construction of scientific knowledge' perspective. The work of the 'Committee for the Scientific Investigation of the Claims of the Paranormal' and its journal are then analyzed with these themes in mind. The Committee sometimes presents itself as revealing the results of its own experiments, and sometimes uses its journal to deconstruct others' work. The cases of 'Remote Viewing' and the astrological 'Mars Effect' are discussed. The analysis bears out the 'active' view as regards the scientific literature. Also, members of the Committee are seen to take up the active view as their experience of controversial science grows.