

## DON'T BE A PSEUDO SCEPTIC

A pseudo sceptic is a person who for ideological reasons says x or y didn't happen. The real sceptic says the evidence speaks and says x did not happen or x is not confirmed to have happened.

Religion talks about miracles as in signs from God that only a being making things from nothing could do. Or a being that was in charge of the future could predict.

Paranormal may not think of that. It just needs something to be hard or impossible to explain by nature or the usual. As far as investigators are concerned, a miracle is to be approached as a paranormal event. Religion says there is a difference but to the researcher God firing a brick through your window practically speaking is no different from checking out a claim that a ghost did it.

Do atheists who think God and miracles are rubbish research the paranormal? Why not? The paranormal usually claims to be testable. Poltergeists and telepathy etc are things that purport to repeat themselves.

The atheist may think such things as telepathy and out of body experiences contradict the law of physics and still investigate. Doing that would not make the atheist wrong but make him a hypocrite at worst. It does not mean he shouldn't check it out. It could mean he is just cautious. The more you check claims that violate nature or challenge science the more you learn how firm nature and science are and you will learn why such violations seem to happen. You need them to do science better. Science is not about just what is science but also about what science is not.

### Paranormal Debunker's Main Principles Cannot Be Debunked

A miracle is a supernatural event and distinguished from a paranormal one. Only a power outside nature can do the supernatural. A power within nature can do the paranormal. The Church says only God is truly outside nature. Satan may be able to do paranormal things but he will be within nature in the sense that God made him. The Church's miracles are hostile to science. Only God can create (assuming creation is possible which it is not) thus you cannot be sure a miracle is from God unless it involves creation. A miracle such as a communion wafer bleeding cannot be verified because you cannot show that the blood was created from nothing there and then. What if some paranormal force did some trick and the blood was not miraculously created? If you have to assume the blood was created then the miracle is is not about giving evidence for God. It is no good and it is insulting to God to say he does miracles to show off. The advantage of limiting miracles to acts of creation is that it weeds out a lot of fraudulent and ignorant claims. However, only God can know if an example of creation miracle really happened. It is no good to us.

We will look at the work of a man who wrongly thinks supernatural and paranormal mean the same thing. For the purpose of replying to him I do the same.

It is important to note that if you need exceptionally good evidence for a paranormal claim, you need even bigger for a supernatural claim. But sadly religion and paranormal researchers keep the bar too low.

The more paranormal claims a person makes the better the evidence that is needed.

The Core Problem: Are sceptics of miracles and the paranormal rejecting or at least ignoring the evidence for the paranormal because they have made assumptions that these things are not real? If they are they are not inquiring after truth. They are following dogma not the truth.

My Comment: Are they pseudo-sceptics? A pseudo-sceptic is not a sceptic. A sceptic examines claims to find the truth and avoids any bias. A pseudo-sceptic assumes that the paranormal doesn't happen and bends the evidence and its interpretation and reason to suit this assumption. It's about them defending their faith that these things don't happen and is not about the truth. There is a danger that pseudo-sceptics and sceptics will be confused together. Pseudo-sceptics masquerade as sceptics.

A pseudo-sceptic will:

1 Ignore any evidence that the paranormal exists.

2 If somebody shows miracle knowledge of the future for example they will say it was coincidence even though it cannot be. They force ridiculous rational or materialistic explanations on the facts. For example, if a miracle statue bleeds they will

say that it must be fraud even though fraud has been definitely eliminated.

3 They demand evidence under laboratory conditions and when it is given to them they say it is insufficient so they are never content. They always manipulate the goal posts.

4 Double standards - they will use hearsay and anecdotal evidence when it undermines paranormal claims but when it supports them they dismiss it. For example, the woman who says that she heard a miracle worker admit to using trickery all the time will be believed and the testimony of cancer sufferers and cripples that they were cured will be ignored.

5 Use character assassination against witnesses of the paranormal in order to take away their credibility.

6 They will say that if a science experiment shows evidence of the paranormal that the test was not controlled properly. So they assume that automatically just because the test threw up a result they don't want to believe in. The proper approach is to look for evidence that the controls were improperly implemented.

A real sceptic will:

1 Admit that evidence for the paranormal exists. This does not necessarily mean that the sceptic may start to believe. The evidence might be too weak or there might be other evidence that contradicts it.

2 Will not force ridiculous rational or materialistic explanations on the facts. For example, if a miracle statue bleeds they will not say that it must be fraud even though fraud has been definitely eliminated. They may point to space warps as identified in physics to explain the wonder. They say then that unknown or unexplained natural laws are doing it. After all, nobody knew why penicillin worked but took it for granted that it could be explained by natural laws yet to be understood.

3 Will demand evidence under laboratory conditions and specify what conditions they need. When they get it they will be happy. They will not manipulate the goal posts. They will not get what they have asked for and then say its not enough.

4 Understand that anecdotal evidence is fine but only if coming from a reliable source. And even then it may be reasonably believed or disbelieved.

5 Will not use character assassination against witnesses of the paranormal in order to take away their credibility. The point is not if the person is good or bad but if they are reliable. A liar can be telling the truth that they saw a vision of Mary for example.

6 They will only say experiments were not controlled properly if there is evidence that they are or could have been. They will not make assumptions. The proper approach is to look for evidence that the controls were improperly implemented.

7 We all make assumptions. The real sceptic will make the assumption that miracles and magic do not happen because the person who says that they do is left with nowhere to draw the line. Anything can be believed. The sceptic cannot be condemned for making an assumption that is so necessary. It is just like how we assume that we are not dreaming that the world and others is real.

It is dishonest of paranormal supporters to go on as if point 7 did not exist. If a sceptic casts doubt on an alleged miracle and a paranormal investigator says it was possibly true then I'd prefer to trust the sceptic. The latter will say this is ad hominem or character assassination. It is he or she who is guilty of these not me.