

To the Editor #2:

It was disappointing that during the *JP*'s period of editorial transition we were neither notified in advance about Solfvin's (2020) original Letter criticizing the development of our "Survey of Strange Events" measure (SSE: Houran et al., 2019a, 2019b), nor given the opportunity to publish a Rejoinder alongside his commentary. But more importantly, we were dismayed that Selvin mischaracterized or misunderstood our outlook and aims as dismissing or minimizing ghostly episodes as "delusions" — along with an associated charge of implicit "bias" on this point. This latter assertion appeared to us as both audacious and ironic because Solfvin failed to disclose his own ongoing and competing work on operationalizations in this domain.

In particular, Solfvin arguably made many unfounded generalizations about our research in just a few short pages. The issues he highlighted deserve a thoughtful and data-driven treatment, but space restrictions (1200 words maximum) prohibit a sufficiently detailed rebuttal here. Therefore, let us simply state that we disagree with most, if not all, of Solfvin's (2020) rhetorical criticisms on conceptual and empirical grounds. Our collective studies need no justification with regards to the psychometric robustness of the SSE measure or its utility for modeling ghostly episodes and encounter experiences. That said, new studies are underway that use the SSE measure to better explore the complexities and nuances of these anomalous experiences across different conditions and contexts. We will certainly report the findings from these efforts in due course.

Returning to the main issue, readers are referred to our full response — an essay entitled "Ghostly Episodes in Modern Psychometric Perspective" — that will appear in the *Mindfield Bulletin* (13.2 issue). As for Solfvin, we encourage him to dispassionately re-read and contemplate the findings and implications of our SSE papers, as well as to acquaint himself with our broader research on ghostly episodes and encounter experiences published in both parapsychological and mainstream scientific journals. He is certainly invited to contact us for a productive debate and potential collaboration that strives for *cumulative model-building* and *theory-formation* concerning these anomalous episodes. Indeed, our team (Houran et al., 2019a, 2019b) is multidisciplinary in its ideology and academic expertise but united in our goal to move the literature on ghostly episodes and kindred phenomena forwards, not backwards.

References

- Houran, J., Lange, R., Laythe, B., Dagnall, N., Drinkwater, K., & O'Keeffe, C. (2019a). Quantifying the phenomenology of ghostly episodes – Part I: Need for a standard operationalization. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 83, 25-46. <https://doi.org/10.30891/jopar.2019.01.03>

- Houran, J., Lange, R., Laythe, B., Dagnall, N., & Drinkwater, K., & O’Keeffe, C. (2019b). Quantifying the phenomenology of ghostly episodes – Part II: A Rasch model of spontaneous accounts. *Journal of Parapsychology*, *83*, 168-192. <https://doi.org/10.30891/jopar.2019.01.03>
- Solfvin, G. (2020). Letter to the editor. *Journal of Parapsychology*, *84*, 335-337. <https://doi.org/10.30891/jopar.2020.02.21>

James Houran^{1 2}

Brian Laythe

Rense Lange

Neil Dagnall

Ciarán O’Keeffe

Ken Drinkwater

1 Laboratory for Statistics and Computation, ISLA—Instituto Politécnico de Gestão e Tecnologia, Rua Cabo Borges (a` Av. República) 4430-646, Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal.

2 Integrated Knowledge Systems, Inc., 7041 Briar Meadow Dr., Dallas, TX 75230, USA; jim_houran@yahoo.com