

Corrigendum

PLAGIARISM IN ARTICLES BY ALEJANDRO PARRA (CONT'D)

This corrigendum continues and brings to a close the issues raised in my previous corrigendum that appeared in the last (June issue) of this journal, the *Australian Journal of Parapsychology* (Storm, 2021). The original corrigendum came about because my attention was drawn to a decision by the editor of the *Journal of Scientific Exploration* to retract a 2017 article by Argentinian parapsychologist Dr. Alejandro Parra for “extensive plagiarism” (Braude, 2021, p. 5). I discussed the problem with colleagues, including other journal editors. For that and other reasons, an AIPR editorial decision was made to check all 13 articles authored or co-authored by Parra that had been published in the *Australian Journal of Parapsychology* (see APPENDIX A).

To determine degree of plagiarism, I used [Plagiarism Detector](#) (online) to test the Introduction and Discussion sections of each article. I counted the number of plagiarized sentences, and calculated percentages as a ratio of original (Parra) material (for details, see Storm, 2021). NB: A revised assessment of Parra and Villanueva (2010) appears in APPENDIX B. I make a special point of noting the fact that plagiarism checkers do not necessarily give the original sources, and in some cases I found multiple sources using the same content with no way of identifying the original authors since many websites do not cite or quote. This is another way plagiarism can go undetected.

To guide my decisions and later actions, I followed the advice of various official organisations, including the Committee On Publication Ethics (COPE; as cited in Wager, 2011), which states:

if only a small section of an article (e.g. a few sentences in the discussion) is plagiarized, Editors should consider whether readers (and the plagiarized author) would be best served by a correction (which could note the fact that text was used without appropriate acknowledgement) rather than retracting the entire article which may contain sound original data in other parts. (p. 3)

I noted also that CSIRO considers a retraction necessary only if “it is found that a published paper contains errors serious enough to invalidate its results and conclusions” (CSIRO Publishing, 1996-2021). Taking this advice into consideration, and after conducting some statistical tests, and conferring with Parra’s co-authors, J. C. Argibay and J. Villanueva, I found no reason to be suspicious of the empirical findings in those 13 articles (i.e., my

conclusion was that the articles contain ‘sound original data’ to use COPE’s words).

Nevertheless, taking plagiarism as a separate issue, and using my percentages and sentence counts as indicators, I reached the following conclusions:

1. One article was free of plagiarism (Parra & Argibay, 2013);
2. No further action other than *corrections* was warranted for seven of Parra’s articles (Parra, 2013, 2015, 2017; Parra & Argibay, 2016; Parra & Villanueva, 2003, 2004, 2006); and,
3. Five articles with *moderate to major* plagiarism required further action (Parra, 2011, 2018; Parra & Argibay, 2008, 2009; Parra & Villanueva, 2010).

In the case of (1), there was no further action. In the case of (2), and in accordance with guidelines set by the International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers,¹ I alerted readers to a correction in the publishing record of the *Australian Journal of Parapsychology* (for a list of the texts and their original authors, see Storm 2021).

In the case of (3), the issue of possible retraction was raised for five articles, so my next step was to contact authors by name whose material was plagiarized *to a moderate or major degree*, and I sought their preferences.

I successfully reached and received responses from ten authors (four have not responded up until the time of publication of this corrigendum).

I now present the responding authors’ opinions and decisions. To be clear, most authors were satisfied with corrections only:

Parra and Argibay (2008)

- Regarding Bruce and Young (1986): “My own view is that as our paper was cited, the omission of quotation marks is not of major concern. I’d be surprised if I haven’t made similar mistakes myself in the past. So I personally see no need for retraction. I am copying this exchange to Andy Young to see if he agrees” (V. Bruce, personal communication, July 14, 2021);
- Regarding Bruce and Young (1986): “Thanks for bringing this to our attention. Like Vicki, I feel fairly relaxed about it. I think that the corrigendum with quotation marks in place is fine. Retraction

¹ See <http://www.stm-assoc.org/documents/#type=Guidelines>

would be overkill” (A. Young, personal communication, July 14, 2021)

- Regarding Schouten (2017): “I appreciate very much that you took the trouble to inform me about this matter and I admire the thoroughness with which you perform your editorial duties. I am not sure that Parra intentionally omitted these references, he might have the same ideas about this topic and 'borrowed' or remembered some sentences he read before in one of my papers. English is not his native language and writing in a foreign language is quite a job. Hence you might point out to him to be a bit more careful in future contributions but as far as I am concerned no further actions are needed. After all, one should be pleased that someone else in the field supports one's ideas” (S. A. Schouten, personal communication, July 20, 2021)

Parra and Argibay (2009)

- Regarding Schouten (1993): See previous comment from Schouten in reference to Parra and Argibay (2008).
- Regarding Roe (1998): “... my opinion is that this is an instance of very poor scholarship that was done intentionally and with awareness that it was improper, so that it certainly warrants a published correction notice. However, unless there is evidence that malpractice makes the claims of the paper unsound (eg if you suspect that the data are not original or indeed have not been collected as described) I am not in favour of retracting the offending articles” (C. A. Roe, personal communication, July 12, 2021).

Parra and Villanueva (2010)

- Regarding Holt, Simmonds-Moore, and Moore (2008): The authors have not responded;
- Regarding Simmonds-Moore and Holt (2007): The authors have not responded;
- Regarding Simmonds and Fox (2002): The authors have not responded;
- Regarding Terhune and Smith (2006): “I just spoke with Matt Smith (cced) and we think that a retraction would be too harsh given that the main content of the study (methods/results) is original and not plagiarized” (D. B. Terhune, personal communication, July 12, 2021).

Parra (2011)

- Regarding Baloğlu and Karadağ (2009): “Dr. Alejandro Parra might have benefited from our comments in his study.... I think there is no need to retract the article. Thank you again for your ethical sensitivity” (N. Baloğlu, personal communication, July 13, 2021).
- Regarding Genovese (2005): “Thanking for alerting me to this issue. I am satisfied with the actions you have taken” (J. Genovese, personal communication, July 12, 2021).

Parra (2018)

- Regarding Hageman and Krippner (2014): “Yes, I know about the plagiarism. But those thoughts are not unique to Joan and to me. I get plagiarized from time to time, and never thought it was worth making an issue about. There is certainly no need for you to retract [the Parra, 2018] article, by the way” (S. Krippner, personal communication, July 12, 2021);
- Regarding Roe and Roxburgh (2014): See previous comment from Roe in reference to Parra and Argibay (2009);
- Regarding Roe and Roxburgh (2014): “Thanks for bringing this to our attention.... I agree with Chris’s comments” (E. C. Roxburgh, personal communication, July 28, 2021)

* * *

It has not been made clear to me why some authors have failed to respond, so I will not make any assumptions, or draw any conclusions. If this corrigendum comes to their attention, I hereby leave open my invitation to them to respond, and I will (with their permission) publish the correspondence in a future issue of the journal.

I now focus on those authors who did respond. I have let them do the talking and the judging—even though I am the editor, and have consulted with many in the parapsychology community, and sought their advice, I had no intention of single-handedly taking on the onerous task of judging for retractability. I already explained why I did not do that; in particular:

... though some might unhesitatingly insist that even minor plagiarism in Parra’s *AJPara* articles warrants more than correction, there is no consensus among journal editors on how to determine sufficient grounds for retraction (nor is there for relevant authorities on these matters; e.g., see Wager, 2011, p. 9). (Storm, 2021, p. 96)

Regarding the above-listed responding authors, the general tone of their comments is that they are satisfied with corrections, and do not feel Parra's articles warrant retraction.

What I did not say last time (Storm, 2021), was that as chief editor of this journal, my first concern and responsibility (which I stress is also the extent of my remit) is the content of the journal. In that context, Parra's 13 authored or co-authored articles had been evaluated for plagiarism, a case was found for plagiarism in 12 articles (extreme in some instances), and I acted accordingly with a two-pronged protocol already outlined above (and see again, Storm, 2021), but I stress again, all within the remit of my editorial role. I want to assure readers that my assessment of the data and the analyses thereof, coupled with statements made by Parra's colleagues Argibay and Villanueva about the separate work they did on the data (the collection and/or treatment thereof), and their other contributions, does not indicate "malpractice" (to use Roe's word). Indeed plagiarism on the one hand, and on the other hand, methodological ineptitude, data falsification, and shoddy analyses (though there were no signs of any of these), are all separate issues, and one infringement does not imply another. Other editors and/or investigators may disagree based on their assessment of Parra's other material published overseas, and they are, of course, free to draw their own conclusions. The point is, we have all been working with different content.

At this juncture, I'm relieved to say the 'Parra case' is closed, particularly in regard to my role as chief editor in the handling of this case. However, what also needs saying is that the rumblings, insinuations, and repercussions throughout the various communities have left me somewhat aghast. I have said before that there is no consensus on what the standards of actions are, or should be, in regard to the treatment of plagiarism (Storm, 2021). I must ask: Shouldn't the parapsychology community *more generally* be discussing these issues, with someone (an elected official?) at the helm, or do journal editors and their associates just go on winging it? I believe offended authors should be involved in the decision-making, so that we can take fair and well-considered steps towards appropriate courses of action. As a consequence of how things are, and have been, I have been very put out by all this plagiarism 'business' (who hasn't been?), and I don't just mean by the work I had to do. For all these reasons, I must express my disappointment in Dr. Parra for his failure to act fully in the manner requested of him some years ago.

Having made my points, I make the statement here and now that, from this day forward (December 1, 2021), regarding the Parra case and especially the opprobrium it has generated, I have no further comment to make (would that others find it as liberating). I will, however, liaise with offended authors who have not yet expressed their thoughts, and as I said, I will publish any responses they choose to make public.

In closing, given that the offended authors (or at least those who have responded) are satisfied with corrections only, and none have requested retractions, the matter of plagiarism in the relevant articles listed in APPENDIX A is settled and closed.

—LANCE STORM

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APPENDIX A

ARTICLES EVALUATED FOR PLAGIARISM IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Study	Yr. (Vol./Iss).	Article Title
1	2003 (3.2)	Parra, A., & Villanueva, J. (2003). Personality factors and psi-ganzfeld sessions: A replication and extension. <i>Australian Journal of Parapsychology</i> , 3(2), 159–174.
2	2004 (4.2)	Parra, A., & Villanueva, J. (2004). Technical paper no. 7. Are musical themes better than visual images as ESP-targets? An experimental study using the ganzfeld technique. <i>Australian Journal of Parapsychology</i> , 4(2), 114–127.
3	2006 (6.2)	Parra, A., & Villanueva, J. (2006). ESP under the ganzfeld, in contrast with the induction of relaxation as a psi-conductive state. <i>Australian Journal of Parapsychology</i> , 6(2), 167–185.
4	2008 (8.1)	Parra, A., & Argibay, J. C. (2008). Reading faces: An experimental exploration of psychometry using photographs and names. <i>Australian Journal of Parapsychology</i> , 8(1), 47–57.
5	2009 (9.1)	Parra, A., & Argibay, J. C. (2009). Psychics vs. non-psychics in “face-to-face” and “remote” token-object reading conditions. <i>Australian Journal of Parapsychology</i> , 9(1), 57–69.
6	2010 (10.2)	Parra, A., & Villanueva, J. (2010). Unusual perceptual experiences and ESP under psychomanteum stimulation: Imagery/hallucination proneness and schizotypal personality measures. <i>Australian Journal of Parapsychology</i> , 10(2), 120–138.
7	2011 (11.1)	Parra, A. (2011). Thinking styles of psychic claimants. <i>Australian Journal of Parapsychology</i> , 11(1), 61-71.
8	2013 (13.1)	Parra, A., & Argibay, J. C. (2013). A free-response ESP test in two hypnotic susceptibility groups: A pilot study. <i>Australian Journal of Parapsychology</i> , 13(1), 27-35.
9	2013 (13.2)	Parra, A. (2013). A phenomenological examination of premonition experiences in dreams and waking states: A survey study. <i>Australian Journal of Parapsychology</i> , 13(2), 187-212.

ARTICLES EVALUATED FOR PLAGIARISM IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER
(CONT'D)

Study	Yr. (Vol./Iss).	Article Title
10	2015 (15.1)	Parra, A. (2015). Seeing rare things with the mind's eye: Visual imagery vividness and paranormal/anomalous experiences. <i>Australian Journal of Parapsychology</i> , 15(1), 37-51.
11	2016 (16.1)	Parra, A., & Argibay, J. C. (2016). Individual, perceptual and psychological differences between psi-tested self-claimed psychics and non-psychics. <i>Australian Journal of Parapsychology</i> , 16(1), 63-84.
12	2017 (17.2)	Parra, A. (2017). Phenomenology of non-dream premonition experience and its relationship with cognitive style, absorption, and luckiness. <i>Australian Journal of Parapsychology</i> , 17(2), 127-145.
13	2018 (18.1)	Parra, A. (2018). Perceptual-personality variables associated with entity encounter experiences. <i>Australian Journal of Parapsychology</i> , 18(1), 23-48.

APPENDIX B

UPDATE TO PLAGIARISM IN PARRA AND VILLANUEVA (2010)

Original Decision: Major Plagiarism (369/1915 = 19.2%; 12 Sentences) due to Unacknowledged Use of the Following Text.

Updated Decision: Major Plagiarism (596/1915 = 31.1%; 22 Sentences) due to Unacknowledged Use of the Following Text.²

The text in quotes is the actual content from its original source, which is effectively the same as it appears in the Parra articles (excluding content in square brackets which Parra did not use, and excluding words he entered of his own choosing). Text *not* used by Parra is also implied by ellipses (... or ...), which I use to avoid confusion. Unless otherwise stated in footnotes, sources were not cited or referenced by Parra.

- **Introduction:** “Belief in [ostensibly] paranormal [phenomena] has [often] been associated with poor critical thinking, suggestibility and psychopathology Schizotypy is a personality continuum which may [underpin both believing in and experiencing] paranormal [phenomena], and artistic creativity. However, cluster analyses [have] indicated that there are two types of [high scorers] on positive schizotypy – one [relating] to mental health ... and [the other] more [to ill health] (high schizotypy)...” (Holt, Simmonds-Moore, & Moore, 2008, p. 1);³
- **Introduction:** “Several authors ... consider [the] cognitive and perceptual anomalies [associated with] schizophrenia ... in the population, [resulting at] one extreme [in] psychotic [breakdown], and [at] the other ... traits (Claridge, 1997[b])” (Simmonds-Moore & Holt, 2007, p. 199);⁴
- **Introduction:** “There is [some] empirical support for the idea of [the] ‘happy schizotype’ ..., who is psychologically healthy and exhibits adaptive traits such as creativity (e.g. Brod, 1997)... Positive schizotypy ... has been [related] to subjective [anomalous

² My thanks to Michael Nahm for providing additional material (M. Nahm, personal communication, August 2, 2021).

³ Holt, Simmonds-Moore, & Moore (2008) is cited and referenced (no actual quoting of this text).

⁴ Simmonds-Moore and Holt (2007) is cited and referenced (no actual quoting of this text).

and paranormal] experiences and beliefs for example, the Magical Ideation Scale (Eckblad & Chapman, 1983) [has been found to be a predictor of] above-chance [ESP] scoring [in the] ganzfeld (Lawrence & Woodley, 1998; Parker, 2000.... Magical Ideation includes some items pertaining to the paranormal (Eckblad & Chapman, 1983), which [could] explain [the relationship as one of] belief [affecting] ESP.... ESP ... also ... Perceptual Aberration Scale (... Parker, 2000), which measures [perceptual] distortions in [the] body image” (Simmonds-Moore & Holt, 2007, p. 199);⁵

- **Introduction:** “[they] may think more hypnagogically while awake. [This would imply] less focused thinking, more [internal] attention and more [perception-like or] hallucinatory imagery ([see] Mavromatis, 1987; Schacter, 1976)” (Simmonds-Moore & Holt, 2007, p. 201);⁶
- **Discussion (p. 133):** “From the study, [both authors] are under the impression that the mentation provided by receivers is similar, and possibly indistinguishable, in nature from [ganzfeld] mentation and therefore that this approach may be of use in the investigation of ESP. Also, casual observations in relation to the protocol, such as the need for a relaxation period to help in the transition between ‘every-day alertness’ and an ‘ESP mentality’ have provided pointers that may assist in the development of a protocol that is psi-conducive [rather than one that results in psi-missing].” (Simmonds & Fox, 2002);
- **Discussion (pp. 133-134):** “Previous research indicates that participants’ perceptual (cognitive and motivational) biases and the implicit demands of a procedure act to influence the induction of hallucinations (Bentall, 1990, 2000). Given that suggestion can exhibit a causal role in the experience of anomalous perceptions [(Lange and Houran, 1997)], it is plausible that the incidence of apparitions in the psychomanteum is a function of explicit suggestions for such experiences presented during the facilitation procedure. This effect may be augmented by enhanced suggestibility, which has been documented during drowsiness, restricted environmental stimulation, and dissociation (Cardena and Spiegel, 1991; Wallace and Fisher, 1999)]. The clear optical depth of the mirror may possess greater perceptual malleability such that percepts may be open to greater (unconscious) alteration

⁵ Simmonds-Moore and Holt (2007) is cited and referenced (no actual quoting of this text).

⁶ Simmonds-Moore and Holt (2007) is cited and referenced (no actual quoting of this text).

in accordance with one's beliefs, motivations, and expectations ([Brugger, 2001;] Hilgard, 1986, p. 88[; Lange and Houran, 2001]). Thus, paranormal belief may inflate reports of anomalous experiences by biasing participants toward belief-congruent interpretations of ambiguous or unstable perceptions.... Mirror-gazing may facilitate dissociative processes through its generation of a mild form of variation reduction [(Wallace and Fisher, 1999)]. Narrowing, and passively maintaining, attention upon a monotonous, homogenous perceptual field (as in ganzfeld-stimulation; Wackerman et al., 2002) may induce an absorption in the stimulus, especially in the presence of a need for sensory stimulation. These developments will lead to the exhaustion of an individual's attentional resources and the concomitant reduction in awareness of internal stimuli and external stimuli divorced from the target stimulus, and thereby foster perceptual distortions. As with ganzfeld, hypnosis, and absorption (Cardeña, 2005; Roche and McConkey, 1990[; Vaitl et al., 2005]), [mirror-gazing] may produce a shift from a lexical to an imagic mode of cognition, advancing an increase in visual imagery, and, thereby, a magnification of hallucination-proneness. [Mediated by] a detached phenomenological state, cognitive disinhibition, the inability to inhibit the emergence of material into consciousness, [will] predispose individuals to experience anomalous perceptions while mirror-gazing." (Terhune & Smith, 2006, pp. 415-416);⁷

⁷ Terhune and Smith (2006) is cited and referenced (no actual quoting of this text).

