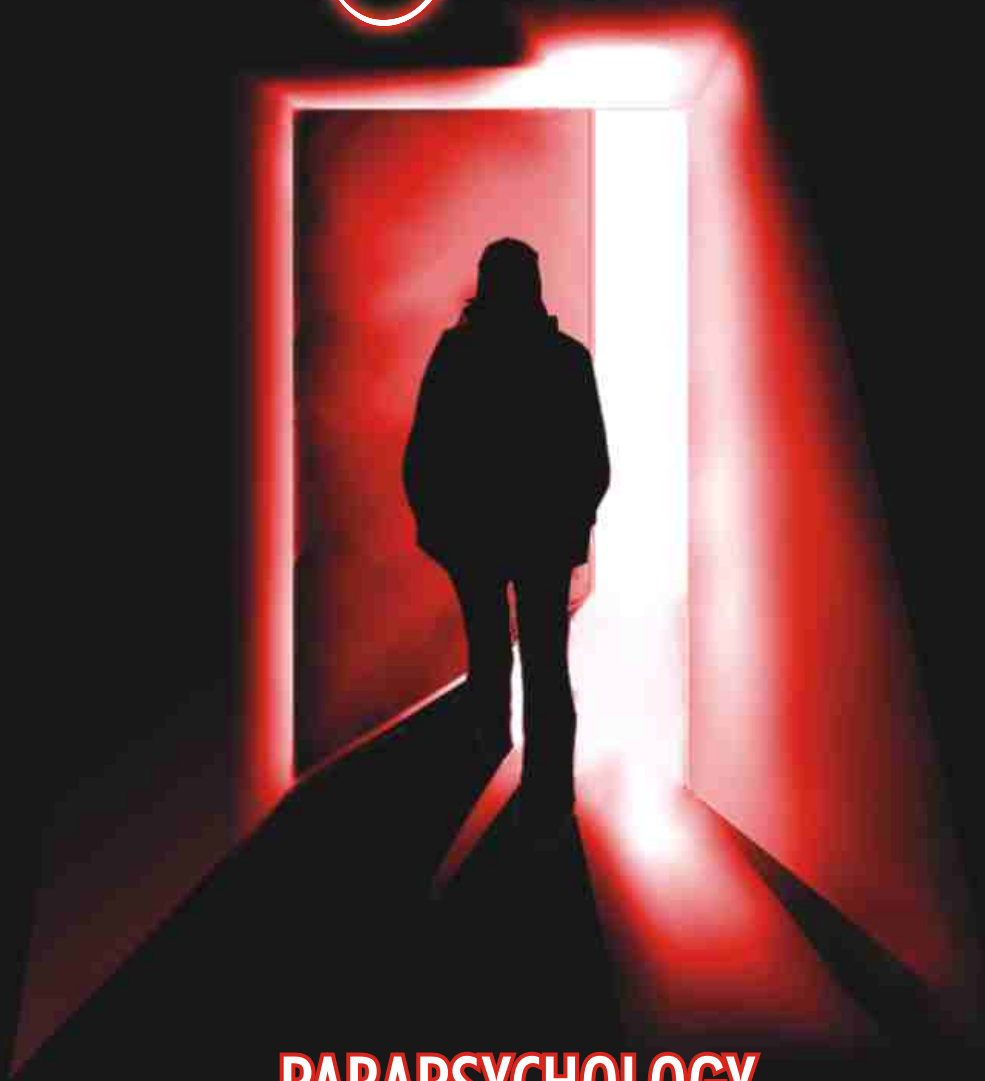




**CHRIST**  
UNIVERSITY

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BANGALORE - 560 029

*Perspective*



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## From the Editor's desk...

**I**n this edition of *Perspective*, we attempted to explore an often-overlooked field, which is from time to time pushed in and out of the mainstream Psychology. The topic, Parapsychology, is unique with its invisible boundaries, which at times branches out to our culture and even our existence as human species. But as an academic discipline it is still struggling for an identity. Drawing lines between the intangible, abstract concepts where subjective notions and apprehensions flourish and the objective stance of scientific validity has been a cumbersome task. It includes a wide array of unexplained and unanswerable phenomena. When we approach Parapsychology, there are many controversies surrounding these topics, misconceptions and challenges that can only be addressed by further discourse. Our writers have struggled to capture and put across for you the essence of different paranormal phenomena such as telepathy, psychic healing, tarot reading, psycho-kinesis, reincarnation and apparitions among others.

In addition, this time the Departments of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Studies in Psychology of Christ University collaborated to produce articles, reviews, poems, sketches, short stories, cartoons and jokes. In the process of obtaining a clearer outlook on Parapsychology we have spoken to experts in the field, teachers, students as well as lay persons about their beliefs and understanding of the discipline. To quantitatively describe the perceptions of the students of Christ University, we conducted a mini research survey too. Through this issue of *Perspective*, we share our attempt to put together the variety of responses and opinions that we come across while understanding the field of Parapsychology. We hope that you will enjoy the reading as much as we enjoyed the making of it.



## Now Christ University...

We are very happy to inform all our readers that Christ College has been declared a Deemed University, in the name and style of Christ University, by the Ministry of Human Resources Development, of the Union Government of India under the section 13 (A) on July 22, 2008.

Established in July 1969, Christ College was born out of the educational vision of **Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara**, the founder of CMI congregation. Blessed Chavara was a great educationalist and a social reformer of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The introduction of an innovative curriculum, insistence on academic excellence and holistic education, and a dedicated faculty ensures that Christ College has been continually rated among the top 10 educational institutions of the country.

- It has the rare distinction of being the first institution in Karnataka to be accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) UGC for quality education.
- On 7 October 2004, UGC had conferred Autonomy to Christ College.
- On May 20, 2005, it became the first College in South India to be reaccredited with A+ by NAAC.
- UGC had identified it as an Institution with Potential for Excellence in June 2006.

Dedicated to the motto of excellence and service, it teaches every pupil to reach out to the star of perfection through an earnest academic pursuit for excellence and a creative and empathetic involvement in the society to transform it.

The Department of Psychology, Christ University has grown tremendously since its establishment. The department has carved a unique niche for itself in terms of creative, innovative, highly effective and interesting teaching methodologies making each student an active participant in the learning process and encouraging positive student-teacher interaction.

Psychology is a vast, interesting and ever-widening field, and the Department of Psychology has ensured that our syllabus keeps pace with the progress of the discipline. It covers a wide field, making it easy for the students to consider a large number of options when they go for higher education. We have more than 900 students pursuing Psychology at the Undergraduate level and 150 students at the masters' level. We offer Clinical Psychology and Psychological Counseling as specializations at the masters' level and have plans to introduce Organizational Psychology in the coming academic year. We also run four Certificate Programs in the department. With the aim of inculcating a research culture among students we have started M.Phil course in psychology coordinated by the research center and Ph.D programme will be started in the near future.

We want to thank all our well-wishers for their encouragement, and solicit their continued support in all our endeavours.

# Haunting as a Gendered Space : The Legend of the Lady in White

Imagine that someone came to you and said they saw a ghost. Irrespective of whether you believe them or not, you do come up with a mental representation of one, and more often than not, it is a figure in white a woman in a white saree, perhaps.

In India there are several variations of this Woman. There is the very famous 'Noorie' (imagine the lady from Bally Sagoo's video for the song 'Noorie' released in 1999),



Photo : Swathi Swaminathan

dressed in a white saree with her thick, black tresses, wild and untied, walking with a candle. In the South Indian state of Kerala, legend has it that a lady in a white saree, with lips red from chewing *paan*, wanders cemeteries in the dead of the night, asking men who pass through the cemetery at that late hour for '*chunna*'. When they stop to give her some, she kills them; leaving their remains to be found on the next day under a palm tree. Along the Rajasthan-Haryana belt in North India, the lady in white, or '*churdale*' as she is called, is said to inhabit '*peepal*' trees. Her feet are turned backwards (with her heels in front and her toes towards the back). Other variations of the white lady legend in the country describe various other features like the presence of a *payal* (anklets), or the sound of the keys of the household, soft sobs to violent cries, laughter, and singing. In Tamil Nadu, she is called as '*mohini piasu*,' whose spiritual remains wanders the outskirts and more often visits her place of death in the midnight. She haunts because of her untimely, unnatural death without fulfilling her desires. The common element in all of these, however, is the sex of the ghost - female, and the color of the garb - white.

The *Ghostly*, thus, does seem to be a gendered space.

Some interpret such representations of the Lady in White in the Indian psyche to symbolize the breaking away of the woman from the grasp of the deeply entrenched system of patriarchy. In this system, the living woman is first under the control of the father, and then the husband. Confined to the house, her only interaction is with her family and that too according to the dictates of patriarchy. Her every move is monitored and controlled, directly or indirectly by the man in the house.

The hair of the spectre, loose, unbound and untamed, could be a symbolic manifestation of this breaking away. She is free to roam about at odd hours and according to her wishes something that would not have been possible during her earthly existence. The sounds of her anklet also seem to signify her freedom to move as she wishes. It is interesting here to note that the anklet on a woman's foot can be gazed as being both beautiful and sensual, and as terrible and inducing fear in the gazer (especially when the spectral figure is seen to be wearing a pair). Borrowing Laura Mulvey's concept of the male gaze, this could be viewed as an altering, if not a reversal, in the skewed power relations between the *male gazer* and the *female gazed*.



Laura Mulvey

The manifestation of the white, female spectre in Kerala can be seen as a confident woman who is looking for sexual satisfaction. She chews *paan* like a man without being apologetic and asks for the white *chunna* which, some say, symbolizes semen and, therefore, the act of attaining sexual satisfaction. The ghost, then, can be seen as a free spirit, experiencing more freedom in her present state than when she was alive.

Dissatisfaction experienced when alive is fulfilled in the representations of the dead. This interpretation could also be applied to similar 'Lady in White' legends across various other cultures with different forms of patriarchy. For example, popular in the Czech Republic is the ghost of Perchta of Rozemberk. Claimed to be sighted at Rozemberk castle, she is believed to have been the daughter of an important Czech nobleman and who married a nobleman, Jan of Lichtenstein without adequate dowry due to which she had an unhappy married life. This again highlights the reason for the haunting as being a dissatisfaction felt by the woman in a patriarchal society.

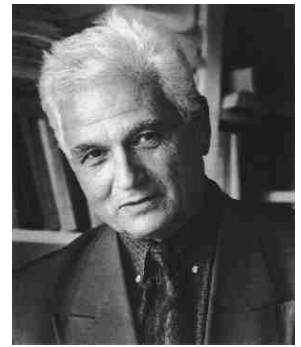
A Brazilian account of the Lady in White reports the ghost of a young woman who died of childbirth or due to other violent causes. Described as a pale woman in a long, white dress or a sleeping gown, she remains mute for the most part but, at times, does retell the stories of her misfortune in a melancholic voice. The origins of the myth are not clear. However, the Brazilian Folklore Dictionary by Luis da Camara Cascudo proposes that the ghost is related to the violent deaths of young white women who were the victims of *honour killing*, murdered by their fathers or husbands for suspected adultery, denial of sex, or abuse. In Quezon City in the Philippines there exists the legend of the white lady of Balete Drive. Described as a long-haired woman in a white dress by taxi drivers doing night shifts, she appears in the wee hours, visible in the rear view mirror before her image disappears. The accidents occurring on this road are believed to be caused by her. According to the legend, she was raped by Japanese soldiers during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines in World War II. Many sources have revealed, however, that this legend was actually manufactured by a reporter in the 1950s, and could be a combination of many stories from the area.

Regardless of whether the stories of the white lady of Balete Drive were exaggerated or fabricated, the incidents in the legend have a haunting quality. For Jacques Derrida (1994), haunting is essential for every dominant social and political order, or hegemony, because it is a sign for what

has been forcefully repressed or eliminated from the hegemonical order due to its potential to overthrow it. He says, "Hegemony still organizes the repression and thus the confirmation of a haunting. Haunting belongs to the structure of every hegemony". In patriarchy, the female potential has been repressed by the male hegemony. Avery Gordon (1997) also sees a haunting as the trace of a potentially different social and political experience. According to her, ghosts are the 'empirical signs' that a haunting is taking place in which the ghost is "not simply a dead or missing person, but a social figure". Ghosts are "that special instance of the merging of the visible and the invisible, the dead and the living, the past and the present" who become 'a crucible for political mediation and historical memory'.

The spectral image of the woman in white in her various forms, therefore, could be a reminder of things unsettled and 'improperly buried' in the present social order, and could consequently be a potential for realizing alternate social and political identities.

**Swathi Swaminathan & Shitika Chowdhary**  
I M.Sc. Psychology



Jacques Derrida

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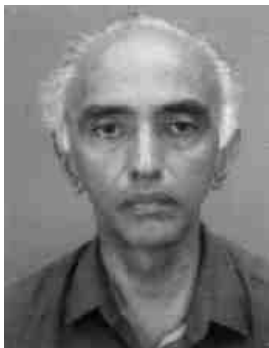
## FAQ - 1

### What is ESP?

ESP refers to extrasensory perception, or an act of learning something about the world that has not been conveyed to us in ordinary ways. The term was coined by J. B. Rhine to denote psychic abilities such as telepathy, precognition, and clairvoyance. It is also known as the sixth sense.

## Dr. George Mathew on Parapsychology

*Dr. George Mathew\* was interviewed during his visit to Christ University a few months ago. He delivered a guest lecture on 'Parapsychology' to the postgraduate psychology students.*



**Shikha Jain(S.J.):**

Sir, we understand that you have a background in physics. What would you say sparked your interest in parapsychology?

**George Mathew (GM):** I was interested in Yoga and Siddhi because I was fascinated by paranormal phenomena much before I came to college. So after my pre-university, I wanted to study psychology, but there was no psychology course at the graduate level at that time. Therefore, as my next option, I went into physics. Then, when I was doing physics I made enquiries and found that there was a psychology department. Any graduate could join there, so I decided to take up the psychology program.

**Niranjana Bennett (N.B.):** Sir, I was just wondering since you have this background in physics do you see some kind of connection between parapsychology, physics and metaphysics?

**GM:** Yes, definitely, because many parapsychologists are not psychologists. Only about 50% of parapsychologists are from psychology. The others are from many other disciplines. And there are many physicists who are interested in parapsychology. Many well-known parapsychologists have had their basic training in physics. And findings of modern physics are very helpful in understanding parapsychology.

**NB:** Could you give us an example?

**GM:** For example, I have met and talked to Dr. E.C.G. Sudharshan, a widely known physicist. He has many theories such as the Theory of All Possibilities. When consciousness reaches a certain level you have a new field called the 'field of all possibilities' which can explain all the paranormal phenomena. He has also explained the similarities between concepts

of modern physics like quantum entanglement. According to the theory of Quantum Entanglement you can link two subatomic particles in a field and later on when they are separated you stimulate one, and the other automatically responds though they are spatially and temporally apart. It cannot be explained in terms of the ordinary laws of nature. Even Albert Einstein did not initially accept the concept of quantum entanglement. Later on, however it received a lot of empirical verification. And now it is accepted.

**SJ:** Did you face any problem while taking up the field of parapsychology from society or family?

**GM:** Yes, everybody discouraged me. When I joined the MA psychology course, from that parapsychology was in the list of possible options. And when I told the professor that I wanted to become a parapsychologist, he advised me not to take parapsychology because it has no application.

**NB:** How do you find parapsychology being integrated into mainstream psychology?

**GM:** I have developed this concept of holigrative psychology which incorporates concepts from parapsychology also. Holigrative approach is humanistic, naturalistic and holistic.

**SJ:** As you mentioned parapsychology is a field of psychology. At the same time, it is different from spirituality. Hence are you placing parapsychology between psychology and spirituality?

**GM:** I am saying we can integrate all these things in holigrative psychology. I don't think parapsychology should be separate from psychology, and many psychologists have accepted spirituality as a part of psychology.

**SJ:** Sir, we heard that you are interested in music and drama and all. Are they just hobbies or are you trying to incorporate them into your theory?

**GM:** Holigrative psychology theory does incorporate it. Artistic experiences do find a place in holigrative psychology.

**SJ:** How do you plan to develop your approach?

**GM:** I give many lectures and I have been conducting awareness workshops for a long time. So this has resulted in postponing writing of my book. Now I am trying to concentrate on that and minimize all other activities. So, I think the book has to come to make any kind of propagation of this approach and once the book is out we will have an oral examination and we will give certificates declaring that they have completed to practice holigrative psychology. Then only it will become popular.

**NB:** You said that psi capacities and psi phenomena are sometimes considered to be a curse. Could you comment on that?

**GM:** I will illustrate the idea with an example. When I was participating in a television programme, somebody was interviewing me on psi phenomena and there was a tall man who was watching the whole thing. After the interview this man came and told me, 'I have a personal problem. That's why I came and

wanted to see you. I want to discuss something with you.' So, I gave him an appointment and he came to my house. He said that he had a certain experience which was bothering him. He knew what was going to happen immediately in the coming few minutes. I asked him to give an example. He told me of one of the earliest examples which had started troubling him. When he was standing near the bus stand, as a college student, some girls were approaching him. At that age he wanted to impress the girls. He suddenly had a thought. He imagined that a white, big, flashy car coming towards him. And the driver from the driver's seat put his head out and asks for directions. He replies. And in his mind he thinks that the girls are seeing all this so it will be good to keep this man here and talk with him. So that the girls will think that the driver is a friend of mine. The girls would be impressed thinking that I have a friend with a very big car. After he imagined all these things, he sees a white car coming and stopping near him. A man puts his head out. In his mind he's giving the same reply and then he's cracking a joke, the man returning another joke. They were laughing and the girls coming very close and watching what was happening. After this incident he thought what the hell is this? Whatever he saw happened exactly. He had this question, did all this happen because he imagined it. The interesting thing is that he could not change anything. He thought 'I am only a puppet' and became extremely upset. He didn't want this to happen. But several months later, again a similar thing happened. And this time it lasted much longer and when it was all over he had a sigh of relief, because it left him with a feeling of helplessness that he could not change whatever he saw. He thought, even if an accident happens, he could not escape it. Even if he saw something drastic, he knew it was going to happen and there was nothing he could do to stop it. He said it would have been very nice if he could see something and do something to prevent it from happening or change it. He didn't want to have this ability. He came to see me to find if there was any way I could help him to stop it from happening. He wanted to live an ordinary life.

**NB:** How do you work with people who come with these experiences?

**GM:** With regard to paranormal phenomena, many people come out of curiosity. They have some unusual experiences and they want to have an explanation. I give an explanation based on

my theoretical understanding of the phenomena. Some people are satisfied, some are not.

**NB:** So is this considered to be inborn, or do you have a predisposition which can be developed?

**GM:** It's partly inborn and partly developed. What you inherit is a predisposition to develop these things. Your experiences either increase these capacities or decrease them.

**SJ:** Did you find any difference in perspectives of parapsychology from the West and India?

**GM:** There is a stark difference. Westerners think that these capacities are to be developed and used for practical purposes like spying or space research or what is happening in another planet and all. But in India, the idea is that psi capacities are not to be perfectly developed because they are a block in the spiritual path.

**SJ:** In psychology we generally tend to follow scientific principles but in parapsychology, we don't have substantial evidence...

**GM:** There is a lot of evidence for parapsychological phenomena. However many psychologists have been ignoring parapsychology. The issue is not the lack of evidence, but the lack of interest in parapsychology among psychologists.

**SJ:** But parapsychologists try to incorporate their work into mainstream psychology. So is it an established scientific study?

**GM:** This controversy of the scientificity of parapsychology became very crucial when parapsychology applied for membership in the American Association. The issue was put for discussion and several psychologists like Margaret Mead strongly argued for parapsychology. And finally it was accepted as a science. All its details were published in the Nature magazine. Parapsychology has also been accepted by American Psychological Association, a well known International Association of Psychology.

**NB:** Are there many institutes in India which study parapsychology?

**GM:** Not many. But here are more abroad, particularly in the UK.

**SJ:** Sir, It's been a pleasure talking to you. This session has provided us with many insights into parapsychology. We thank you for your time.

**Shikha Jain & Niranjana Bennett**  
II M.Sc. Psychology

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*\* Dr. V. George Mathew, Former Professor and Head of Department of Psychology, University of Kerala, is a pioneer in the field of Holigrative Psychology and has contributed greatly to the understanding of parapsychological phenomena in India. We felt that our present edition of Perspective on Parapsychology would be incomplete without an understanding of his impressions on Parapsychology.*

## Tarot over Tea

*The name of this article is a tribute to the multiple cups of tea that were consumed during its writing, if not for tea this article would not exist.*

"I'm going to do a general reading for you, unless you want a specific question answered?"

I shook my head, "A general reading sounds like a good idea."

Shriya pushed up her purple rimmed glasses to get a better look at the 'how to perform a reading' section on the tarot manual. "Okay so this is a fan spread, it tells you about different aspects of your life. Shuffle the cards." I did.

Was I nervous? Maybe, but admitting it would mean that I cared about what the cards had to say about me. It would also mean that to some extent I believed that a pack of cards was capable of telling me something about myself that I did not have the resources to answer. Yet I will agree that it was exciting, the prospect of finding solutions to everyday dilemmas, the prospect of learning something about the future; it was all exhilarating.

Let me begin with a more appropriate introduction. Tarot reading is based on the belief that the cards can be used to gain insight into the present and future situations of individuals. Some believe that the way the cards turn up are guided by a spiritual force, while others believe that they help people tap into a collective unconscious or their own creative, unconscious mind.

On the other hand Parapsychologists are said to be interested in phenomena such as Telepathy; or the transfer of information on thoughts or feelings between individuals by means other than the five classical senses, Precognition or the perception of information about future places or events before they occur and Clairvoyance which refers to obtaining information about places or events at remote locations, by means unknown to current science. The Tarot deck is supposed to help the reader do all of these things.



**Carl Jung**

It was however Carl Jung, a Swiss psychoanalyst, who was the first to pay formal attention to the Tarot for its psychological implications. He may have regarded the Tarot cards as representing archetypes: fundamental types of person or situation embedded in the collective unconscious of the entire human race. In therapy based on this model, the client, with the aid of the therapist, uses the Tarot cards to tell a story and then discusses possible meanings of the symbols in his or her own words. The therapist then tries to form a connection between the symbolic meanings given by the

client and the client's problem or current life situation. To illustrate the similarity between tarot card symbolism and Jung's archetypes we can draw on the following examples:

1. The Fool - The fool as a court jester holding a baton and standing near a cliff. This symbolism suggests silliness, but an intentional silliness. This card portrays Jung's archetype of Eternal youth.
2. The Juggler or Magus - This card usually depicts a parlor magician going through a magic act of some kind with various magical tools on a table.
3. The Empress - This card is symbolized by a mature woman wearing a crown and seated on a throne. This suggests the feminine side of the psyche or any strong feminine authority. She is the ultimate feminine creator and provider. The imagery suggests Jung's archetype of the mother.
4. The Emperor - This card is symbolized by a mature man wearing a crown and seated on a throne. This suggests the masculine side of the psyche or any strong masculine authority. He is the ultimate masculine creator and provider. The imagery of this card suggests Jung's archetype of the father as well as the hero.



*Photo : Swathi Swaminathan*

5. **The Hierophant** - Like the Emperor, this card is usually shown as a mature man wearing a crown and seated on a throne. Some decks show this as the Pope or some other religious leader which clearly distinguishes the difference between the Hierophant and the Emperor; the former is religious while the latter is civil or social. This card's suggests the archetype of the wise old man.

Once the client has told a story with the tarot cards, the therapist can then explore the personal meaning of the symbols while in keeping in mind the archetypal implications of the symbol.

Today Dr. Rosengarten, a licensed clinical psychologist based in California seems to be making attempts to integrate psychology and the Tarot. In his book, "Spectrums of Possibility", he stresses time and again how Tarot and the field of psychology are essentially compatible.

Honestly, I can't say that this happened to me in my experience with tarot. I did not try and look at the archetypal symbolism behind the cards in my reading. I was simply too busy trying to determine if the reading was accurate or not. I was too busy examining the truth of the statements made by re-examining myself and my life.

That is where I personally feel that the Tarot can be a psychologically useful tool. Every time I would hear the reading about my character, my expectations, or my future, I was forced to introspect. The elaborate paintings on the cards became a mirror, a mirror that would repeatedly make me ask, "Am I really like this?"

At the end of the day doesn't any form of psychotherapy involve taking a long, hard look at ourselves? A tarot card reading in many ways facilitates just that. Perhaps the day has come that a tarot deck finds its position between a Rorschach inkblot test and The Thematic Apperception Test in a psychologist's office.

Don't take my word for it, try it yourself.

**Shudarshana Gupta & Shriya**  
II M.Sc. Psychological Counseling

# Possession

I feel my muscles and mind go tense,  
I feel some unnatural presence.  
Breaking into a cold sweat I run,  
As fast as I can to escape being undone.

I come to a dead end, I'm lost,  
I turn to see a pale faced ghost.  
With a scarred body and a frozen gaze,  
She stares at my soul through my still face.

Her cuts are bleeding, but stains nothing,  
I close my eyes wishing for this to be a dream.  
Suddenly I feel her take hold of me,  
And she lets out a bone crushing scream.

Startled, I open my eyes to meet hers  
And through those eyes I see her lost years.  
I realised what she wanted from me.  
I know now, she only wants my body.

Pushing my soul aside, she control of me,  
She takes me to the person who puts her to sleep.  
I didn't understand what she wanted here  
Till she saw him, her husband who killed her:

He recognised, through my eyes, her gaze  
And he realises that he has to be erased.  
In a split second my hands are around his neck,  
She snaps it in two with inhuman strength.

Sharing my eyes, we stare at the body,  
Of the man that had killed her so lovingly.  
She pulls away, out of my skin,  
Telling me that her life will again begin.

Ever so often I see her once cold face,  
Feel he, once chilled, now warm gaze,  
Fall on my back for quite a while,  
I see her life through a new born child.

**Shravan Nayar**  
I BA - Journalism Psychology English

# Gender, Religion, Education...

## Paranormal Beliefs Transcends All Barriers !



*We must drive the objector into the position of being forced either to admit the phenomena as inexplicable, at least by him, or to accuse the investigators either of lying or cheating or of a blindness or forgetfulness incompatible with any intellectual condition except absolute idiocy.*



**Henry Sidgwick**

First President,  
Society for Psychical Research

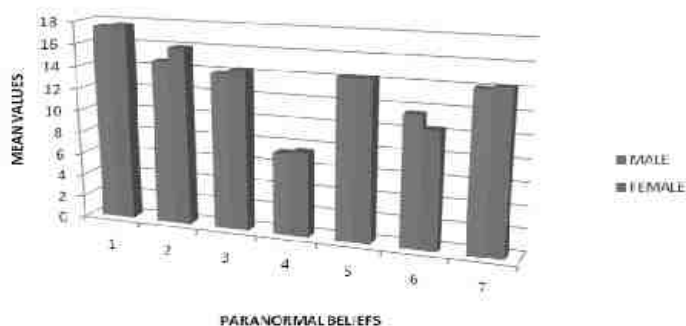
Henry Sidgwick, in his presidential address, emphasized the attitude that governs research. It is important to derive conclusions that validate the premises, which what the scientific discipline aims for. Often, in this pursuit for objectivity, the subjective experiences and beliefs are undermined and termed paranormal. Goode defines "paranormal" as "Events, phenomena, or powers that scientists regard as contrary to the laws of nature". He notes that "Paranormal claims or stories invoke or make use of forces, factors, dynamics, or causes that scientists regard as inconsistent with a satisfying, naturalistic or materialistic, cause-and-effect explanation" (Goode, 2000). This gives some insight as to why paranormal phenomenon is not studied under mainstream psychology. Psychology, since its inception, has been struggling to find its identity by either aligning itself to science or art but at the same time, failing to identify with either of the fields. In this research, students' pattern of paranormal beliefs was understood in relation to their education and other demographic characteristics like gender and religion.

This research didn't aim at discovering answers of paranormal phenomena but to merely understand the beliefs pertaining to paranormal phenomenon in college

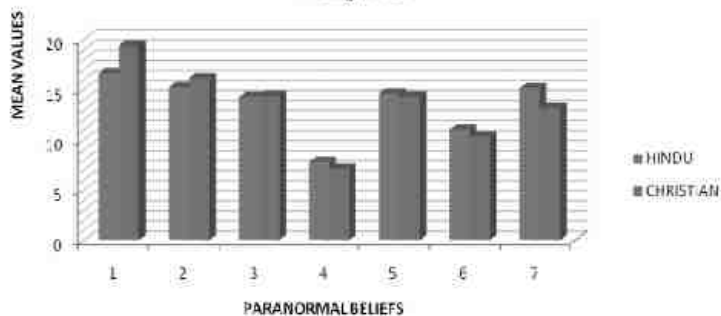
students. For this purpose, a survey was conducted by the *Perspective team* on 205 students of Christ University from different disciplines and religious backgrounds (Hindu: n=121; Christian: n=63; Other: n=23). The students were of the age range 17 to 26 years pursuing different courses from arts (n=38), science (n=57) and commerce and management (60) at the baccalaureate and graduate levels. Few of the students had been exposed to psychology either as part of the programme or by the keenness to know about the discipline (n=59).

A 26-item Revised Paranormal Belief Scale (Tobacyk, 1988) was used to measure the degree of belief in each of seven dimensions: Traditional Religious Belief (1), Psi (2), Witchcraft (3), Superstition (4), Spiritualism (5), Extraordinary Life Forms (6), and Precognition (7). Responses to each item are scored on a seven-point Likert scale with a higher rating indicating stronger endorsement. A similar study was done by Chris Huntley and Tim Peeters (2000) to determine the relationship between paranormal beliefs, religious beliefs and personality correlates.

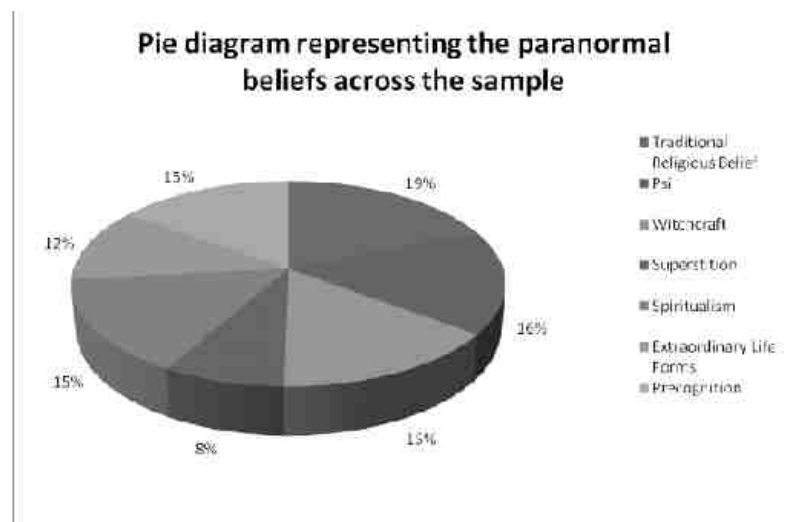
**Graph representing the mean values obtained by men and women in each of the paranormal beliefs**



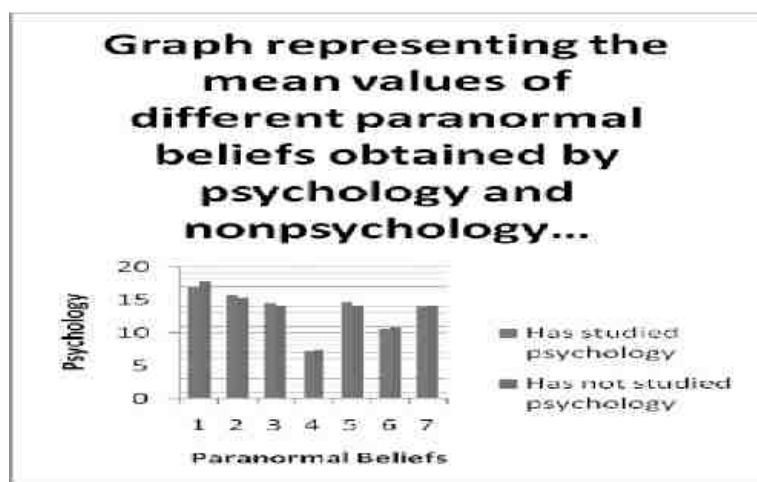
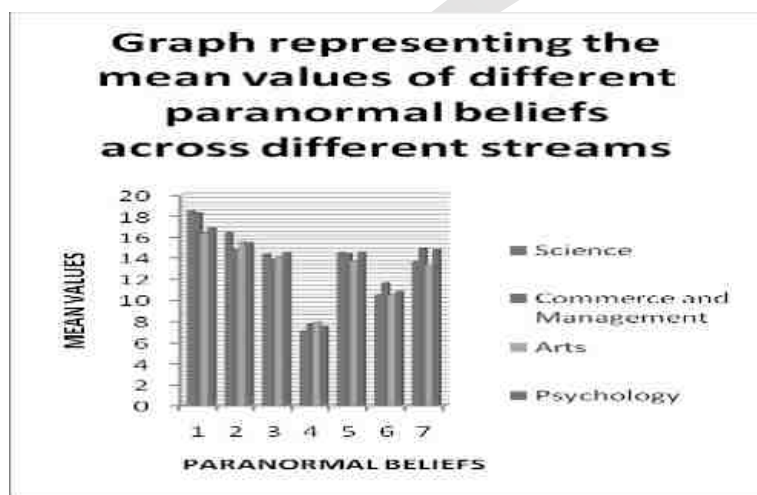
**Graph representing the mean values of different paranormal beliefs across different religions**



The results indicate that the present sample attribute paranormal beliefs to 19% Traditional Religious Beliefs, 16% Psi, 15% Witchcraft, 8% Superstition, 15% Spiritualism, 12% Extraordinary Life Forms and 15% Precognition.



The results indicate that there were no differences among different groups of students of arts, science, commerce and management and psychology; between men and women; Hinduism and Christianity or psychology and nonpsychology students.



This result was different from previous findings, which had suggested that women score higher on global paranormal belief, while men have stronger beliefs in the existence of UFO's and extraterrestrials (Clarke, 1991; Rice, 2003; Tobayck & Milford, 1983) as males are usually encouraged to take more interest in science, while females are socialised to be better informed about religious issues. However, Dag (1997) also found no significant gender differences, except for Superstition scores among females and Extraordinary Life Forms scores among males, which were significantly higher. A study by Lester, Thinschmidt and Trautman (1987) reported that precognition experience and paranormal belief were directly related to feeling and intuition scores, supporting the view that believers tend to be less logical, more open-minded and prone to fantasy than non-believers.

Enquiry in this realm could have implications in the therapeutic practice. Wolfradt (1977) suggested that superstition and spiritualism should correlate positively, and psi belief should correlate negatively with external locus of control. Paranormal beliefs have been closely associated with magical thinking that is among the defined symptoms of some psychiatric disorders like schizotypal personality disorder in the DSM-IV (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). It has been found that those who scored highest on magical thinking showed a predisposition to psychosis (Eckblad and Chapman, 1983) and is positively correlated with manic-depressive experiences (Thalbourne and French, 1995). It serves a utilitarian function of distancing oneself from reality (of a situation or experience) as a defence mechanism.

As the study was one of the first exploratory investigations in the area of paranormal psychology in India, future research can involve understanding the paranormal phenomena from different perspectives, thereby tracing its various dimensions. It could also involve ascertaining the origins and persistence of beliefs in paranormal

phenomena from the subjective point of view. As there are many forms of paranormal beliefs, the individual is influenced by cultural factors, such as family, peer group processes, dissemination of paranormal concepts in the media and formal persuasion by social institutions, e.g. the church (Schriever, 2000).

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## FAQ - 2

### Who has ESP?

This psychic capacity is innate in all living beings and it can be developed with practice and awareness. Persons who are better adjusted emotionally, less anxious, socially more comfortable and more open-minded are more likely to show tendency for ESP.



Cartoon by  
**Anupam Manur**  
III BA - Psychology Sociology Economics

# Encounter

## Hospital

All he could think about was her.

His life waning steadily, he thought about how she had wept and pleaded for her life. The tears spilling down her cheeks and onto his hands. A mute plea for mercy.

The cancer raging through his body did not care that he was not ready to die. He needed to seek forgiveness. Now.

He lifted his eyes to the heavens and saw a curious sight. A pathway of light had opened up before him. The very air seemed to shimmer. Tiny dust particles gleamed as they danced in the mysterious light.

What was this? The steady flat tone of the monitor penetrated through the chaos surrounding him and he understood. And tensed in anticipation.

Sure enough, he felt weightless. Like a soft breeze could carry him to the ends of the earth. He stood up from the bed, stepped into the light and immediately disappeared from sight.

## The Twilight zone

He was in heaven.

How else could he describe this glorious place that seemed to be made of soft white light. A faint sound behind him made him turn expectantly.

It was her.

The happiness drained out of him to be

replaced by guilt and dread. She seemed so at peace, so happy. He stiffened. She was smiling at him, gesturing for him to come closer.

'Emmanuel'. Her voice made him weak. He mustered the strength to look her in the eyes and was astonished at the immense love and pity that glowed there.

'I know the pain you have gone through since that fateful day', she said to him. 'You wasted the best years of your life on regret and shame. But know that what you did is forgiven.'

He looked up at her when she said this with growing amazement.

'You forgive the fact that I robbed you of life?'

'I forgive because you have understood the graveness of your sin and repented for it. Your guilt has set you free.' she gathered him into her arms and kissed away the tears coursing down his face.

Through the haze of tears he could see that the pathway had appeared again before him. He looked at her in confusion.

'it is not your time to come home, Emmanuel,' she said lovingly. 'Your place is back on earth where you will teach others the fleeting nature of life'.

He took one last look at her glorious face and stepped into the light.

## Hospital

He heard the steady beep of the monitor, signaling his return to life. He opened his eyes and looked at each astonished face before him in a new light.

'Life is precious,' a voice whispered close to his ear. He lifted his head to the heavens and closed his eyes in understanding.

**Sneha Abraham**

II BA - Journalism Psychology English

## FAQ - 3

**Is it advisable to practice this psychic capacity?**

As it is innate everybody can develop it. But according to Mrs. Swarnalatha Iyer (H.O.D. of UG psychology dept.) it is a power, which could be frightening at times and lead to apprehension. The individual can look into the future, but has no power to control the events. It leaves them with a feeling of helplessness.

## The Sixth Sense - A Review

**Director** : M. Night Shyamalan

**Producers** : Kathleen Kennedy,  
Frank Marshall,  
Barry Mendel

**Cast** : Bruce Willis,  
Haley Joel Osmen,  
Tony Collette

The Sixth Sense is a chilling psychological thriller in which eight year old Cole is haunted by a dark secret; he is visited by ghosts. They visit him with their unresolved problems and Cole feels threatened by their visitations. Confused by his paranormal powers, Cole is too young to understand his purpose and too terrified to confess to anyone about his torment. At this juncture comes Dr. Crowe, a child psychologist who tries to uncover the ominous truth about Cole's supernatural abilities. Cole who says something to him that will change their lives forever. "I see dead people." This meeting between the client and the therapist is a jolt that awakens them both into something harrowing and unexplainable. The movie revolves around the fear of having a sixth sense about what lies beyond and the fears about not understanding those intuitions.

The Sixth Sense is a psychological drama involving paranormal powers of the protagonist (Cole) and involves horrific and gruesome images of the dead. Extrasensory perception or what we commonly term as the sixth sense are of different types. It is basically an alleged ability to acquire

information by means other than the known senses. In this movie, M. Night Shyamalan tries to show how the ability to sense communications from and communicating with people beyond the grave works and what it can do to the psychological well being of an individual. The Sixth Sense is horror flick but it disturbs the audience rather than scaring them. The movie talks about a subject that is still under question of its very existence. The climax, the twist in the movie is brilliant and it makes one wonder if this phenomenon could actually exist. This does not mean that Shyamalan is actually pushing an opinion that the phenomena exists and hence trying to make people believe in it.



Instead, he is just trying to put across a point to make us think that a lot of events that take place in our lives that may not have a logical explanation.

The movie is a must watch not only for the believers in the existence of ESP but also those who criticise it, so that it can make us keep our minds (and probably even our 'extra senses') open to all possibilities. Nothing can be accepted or rejected without proof. The claim that the phenomena is a taboo subject in the scientific and

rationalist communities results in sociological, rather than scientific barriers to research. Leaving aside the entire issue about the existence or non existence of the sixth sense, the movie should be given a watch for the brilliance in acting and the smartness of storytelling.

**Meghana Srivatsa**

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## FAQ - 4

**Sometimes my dreams come true. Does this mean I have ESP?**

Research has shown that dreams carry accurate ESP information, for some people. It is uncertain how widespread the phenomenon is, but it does not appear to be restricted to specific people. Dreams may sometimes contain flashes of genuine extrasensory information. However hasty conclusions that you are "psychic" or "have ESP" are unwarranted or inadmissible.

# Paranormal, Merely Normal :

## Interview with Dr. Sujendra Prakash

Dr Sujendra Prakash\* is an extraordinary man who has made his career on extraordinary things. His interest in parapsychological phenomena began in school when he came across a blind beggar boy in his neighbourhood who could 'see' and identify colours despite his handicap. From a young age, Dr Prakash was of the opinion that people ignore the phenomena that they cannot understand. According to him, what we 'see' is what we have learned to see. Dr Prakash has made it his life's work to understand the misunderstood.

Parapsychological phenomena has been divided by Dr Prakash into Internal Behaviour, External Behavior and Discarnate Survival. Internal behaviour includes extra-sensory perception (ESP) such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy and precognition, i.e. processes that occur within a person. External behaviour is manifested outwards and it includes psycho-kinesis (PK) such as psychic healing, levitation and recurrent spontaneous psycho-kinesis (RSPK), more commonly known as the poltergeist phenomenon. Discarnate Survival deals with phenomena such as the survival of the spirit after bodily death and reincarnation. In just a few words, we (Mathews and I) had breached the confines of this world as we had known it.

The question that arises at this point is how do you explain these happenings? And how do you prove them to be? And as we interviewed Dr Prakash, we discovered that answers can be found for those that go after them. Traditionally, our interviewee said, psychology commits the mistake of considering perception to be ultimate and yet the perceived constitutes only a small part of everything that can be sensed. The folly of the psychologist lies in the fact that sensation forms a yet smaller part of reality. For instance, human beings cannot see anything outside the narrow range of visible human spectrum, beyond into ultraviolet or infrared spectrum bands of light. Imagine... what people cannot see is so much more than what we can!

There are realms of knowledge existing outside the current capabilities of the five

senses that society believes not to exist. Dr Prakash states that people lack the understanding to understand some phenomena and thus ignore it. He says, "What people 'see' is what they have learned to 'see'. What they perceive is only the patterns we have been trained to perceive". It struck me then how the paranormal is merely normal... if we can understand it.

Dr. Prakash also spoke of the tremendous power of the suggestibility of thought, something that psychologists are at least aware of through the placebo effect. The power of suggestion is greatly heightened during altered states of consciousness. According to him, during an altered state of consciousness, a pin can be inserted into one's skin and removed without any feeling of pain, traces of blood or marks. Hypnosis is one such altered state of consciousness. Today, sophisticated brain imaging techniques can provide evidences that there are changes in the brain when one is manifesting paranormal activities.

For sceptics in claims of paranormal or 'supernatural' events, we found out that the methods of research in parapsychology are exacting and stringent. Parapsychological researchers follow a rigorous empirical approach to identify high probability phenomena. Dr Prakash asserted that most researchers only report what they have measured very consistently before providing it as evidence in a study. This was true of the researches he himself has conducted for more than 20 years now.

Inevitably, we wanted to know if we could develop abilities such as the ones we had been talking about... telepathy and psychokinesis, precognition and psychic healing. Dr Prakash must be accustomed to such eager questions for he replied immediately that we can develop such abilities at any point in life. Human beings can increase their ability to see beyond the obvious contingent on how we utilise our brain. He was precise and unapologetic as he stated that people have failed to use nearly all of their brain capacity.

My brain was working overtime as I strove to process the scope and magnitude of all this information. Parapsychology is an exciting new field of study that can roll back the horizons of the world and uncover uncharted vistas of knowledge.

**Sabah Siddiqui**  
II M.Sc. Psychology

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*\*Dr Sujendra Prakash is a consultant psychologist at the Life Management Academy in India and member of the American Psychologists Association. His Ph.D. on the colour perceptions by the blind was path-breaking. He has been attached with Christ College, Bangalore as the Head of the Dept of Psychology and he is also the founder of the Department of Psychology in the S.D.M College, Ujjire. He was interviewed at his residence in Bangalore by Sabah Siddiqui and Mathews George, students of IIM.Sc. Psychology.*

# The Almost Real

Parapsychology has often been referred to as a pseudoscience by scientists across the world as it has shown little or no evidence to support its claims. Initially, parapsychology was a very limited field which comprised of four paranormal phenomena viz. telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition and psychokinesis, collectively known as the psi. The advance of science and technology has left many phenomena unexplained. In 2001, Robert and Groome included astrology, sightings of aliens and UFO's, near death experiences, meditation, dreams, unconscious, subliminal perception and the placebo effect in their list of paranormal or unusual experiences. . They define the placebo effect as 'the tendency for a therapy to have a beneficial effect which exceeds its known therapeutic mechanisms, sometimes as a result of mere suggestion and expectation on the part of the patient'.

The word placebo is Latin for 'I will please'. Hooper's (1811) Quincy's Lexicon-Medicum defines placebo as "an epithet given to any medicine adapted more to please than benefit the patient".

According to Shapiro and Shapiro (1997), the placebo effect is 'the nonspecific, psychological or psychophysiological therapeutic effect produced by a placebo, or the effect of spontaneous improvement attributed to the placebo'.

The inclusion of the placebo effect in the list of parapsychological phenomena and its use by medical practitioners across the world has lent considerable interest as well as credibility to the field of parapsychology.

Empirical studies have been conducted to view the presence of the placebo effect. One example of this was when scientists tricked runners into thinking that they were drinking oxygenated water thus making them perform better. In reality, the runners were drinking regular tap water. When they

ran they even performed better because they thought what they were drinking would enhance their performance.

Studies have also shown that the placebo effect can alleviate pain, although the effect is more pronounced with pre-existing pain than with experimentally induced pain. People can be conditioned to expect analgesia in certain situations. When those conditions are provided to the patient, the brain responds by generating a pattern of neural activity that produces objectively quantifiable analgesia. (Benedetti et al. 2003, Wager et al. 2004)

A brain-imaging study found that depressed patients who responded to the placebo effect showed changes in cerebral blood flow, which were similar to the changes in brain function seen in patients who responded to anti-depressant medication. (Leuchter 2002) Other studies argue that up to 75% of the effectiveness of anti-depressant medication is due to the placebo-effect rather than the treatment itself. (Khan et al. 2000)

However, the uses of placebos have subjective and objective factors. Hróbjartsson and G ø t z s c h e published a study in 2001 and a follow-up study in 2004 questioning the nature of the placebo effect. (Hróbjartsson & Gøtzsche 2001; Hróbjartsson & Gøtzsche 2004) They performed two meta-analyses involving 156 clinical trials in which an experimental drug or treatment protocol was compared to a placebo group and an untreated group, and specifically asked whether the placebo group improved compared to the untreated group. The placebo effect could only be documented in studies in which the outcomes (improvement or failure to improve) were reported by the subjects themselves. The authors concluded that the placebo effect does not have "powerful clinical effects," (objective effects) and that patient-reported improvements (subjective effects) in pain were small and could not be clearly distinguished from bias.

These results suggest that the placebo effect is largely subjective. This would help explain why the placebo effect is



Anti-bilious bitters and other early placebos



Prescription placebos used  
in research and practice

easiest to demonstrate in conditions where subjective factors are very prominent or significant parts of the problem. Some of these conditions are headache, stomachache, asthma, allergy, tension, and the experience of pain, which is often a significant part of many mild and serious illnesses.

When medical students were asked about their opinion on the placebo effect, they had different responses. Paritosh Ballal, K.S. Hegde Medical College said “well it works amazingly well on people with psychiatric disorders as well as amongst the illiterate. It is the doctor's best tool when he has no meds to offer.” Sucheta Prabhu, A. J. Shetty Medical College, opined, “although placebo's are believed not to be very beneficial, there are some instances where they could be useful”. Samskruti Shetty, Kasturba Medical College believed that placebos could be used to reduce the harmful effects of unnecessary drug intake.

Scientists who are critical of parapsychology begin with the assertion that extraordinary claims demand extraordinary evidence. Proponents of

hypothesis that contradict centuries of scientific research must provide extraordinary evidence if their hypothesis are to be taken seriously.

The problem arises because scientists find it difficult to see how psychological factors can influence physical or physiological processes that result in measurable changes in the body and the brain. This is because medicine, psychology and common sense all share the basic dualism of mind and body.

Although the placebo effect goes against the biomedical model of disease, evidence from all areas of medicine suggests very strongly that the placebo effect is a real phenomenon. One can only hope that the growing body of evidence will enable the discredited sister, i.e. the placebo, to be welcomed back into the field of medicine.

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## FAQ - 5

### Is there a 'Para' in parapsychology?

Parapsychologists might best, be thought of as a part of general psychology, and there should be no need for the prefix Para. But it is still included since 'Para' means 'alongside of'. It is actually an area of scientific work persisting alongside orthodox psychology. Those who persist in studying these things do so because they believe that the questions are quite important, important enough to labour outside the mainstream of science with little support and with considerable danger to one's scientific reputation.

## Light on Auras



"A very beautiful woman hardly ever leaves a clear-cut impression of features and shape in the memory; usually, there remains only an aura of living color"

"I like her; there is an aura about her that is very interesting". These are the kind of sentences we are used to reading or hearing in our interactions. But what most of us (probably even the users of the word 'aura') do not know is that aura is not just an abstract feeling or a vibe we get from a person, it is real and its existence has been proven scientifically by various Parapsychologists. It is defined as "a field of subtle, luminous radiation surrounding a person or object like the halo."

Auras were first studied by Dr Walter Kilner, St. Thomas Hospital, London ( The Human Atmosphere, 1920). He observed auras extending from the naked bodies of his patients through the screen of dicyanin (a coal tar derivative) dye up to several inches. More refined methods of photographing auras were developed by soviet scientists Seymon and Valentina Kirlian, later improved upon by Thelma Ross and Ken Johson. The method was to photograph the auras around people within high frequency electric fields known as Kirlian Photography. In both these early studies, the halos seemed to vary in quality in terms of size and colour depending upon

the emotional state and the health of the person.

While a physician from Chicago had claimed to have observed the auras through the dye screens following Walter Kilner's methods, many other scientists failed in the pursuit. One study to prove the falsity of auras was Phantom Photos. The amputated parts of an organism were photographed same way as Kirlian photography was done and they found the same effect. This shook the scientific basis of the existence of the auras since the basic assumption was that living organisms produced characteristic auras.

The researches and the studies that helped in developing this area of interest went on in spite of a few unanswered questions and drawbacks. Charles Leadbeater, a theosophist gave the meanings of the colours of auras around people. Usually, auras contain two complimentary colours or auric pairs. The interpretations of these colors follow a logical pattern when studied; it is similar to how we interpret color in general or in a piece of art.

Colors, like black, are instinctually associated with negativity; black aura similarly indicates hatred, intention to harm and violence against others. Bright shade of gray represents selfishness while a dark gray represents depression. This way the spectrum of colors denotes the spectrum of emotions and states of minds. As the phrase goes one was green with envy, a green aura represents jealousy; likewise one was red with anger applies to the interpretation of red aura as anger. Again the color crimson, associated with the little heart we draw to show love to someone indicates nothing but love and a darker hue indicates passion. We see the halos on the religious leaders or prophets which are usually painted yellow; the same applies to a person with yellow aura it indicates intelligence resulting also in inner joy. If one notices the back drop that any or artistic depiction of anyone in a religious trance it is usually blue, hues of blue indicate spirituality ranging from a religious dark blue to a spiritual light blue.

Once the basics of interpreting the auric colors are established, then the intensity of each color and the combinations are studied. For instance- a green aura with flashes of red shows

that the person is jealous and angry about the object of envy. Auras that depict negative states are usually darker than the background while the positive auras are translucent and tend to glow. Also, the more uniform the energy distribution in the Aura, the healthier and more balanced the person is.

These colours or basically the qualities of the halos are theorized only to reflect the True Self of a person. The true self of a person is the self when all the superficial layers and biases are removed from a person, the core left inside of self is the true self.

Using complex equipment, the energy distribution seems to have the potential of a medical diagnostic tool. For instance, Dr. Kilner in his book *The Human Atmosphere* (1920) elucidates in the fifth chapter on *The Aura* during pregnancy as to how there are signs in auras that manifest which could be used in detecting early pregnancy.

On the other side, it is merely seen as a phenomenon occurring due to biological imbalances. In words of a skeptic Robert Todd Carroll-auras may be seen for reasons

such as migraines, epilepsy, a visual system disorder, or a brain disorder.

Even if the actual basis of auras was science, its roots are formed in spirituality. The skeptics constantly question the existence and the significance of the aura.

Extensive researches are done in the field and much significance has been brought to light. But the drawback of Parapsychology as a field itself is that it is self contradicting. The psychic elements and energies need not always be tangible and substantial but its importance can not be over looked. Dr. Thimmaiah, former Vice Chancellor of Bangalore University and a key figure in introducing Psychology as an area of study for students in Colleges remarked in a seminar (Cogmist, 2007 Jain College Psychology Fest), how western psychology and eastern philosophy are strikingly similar? The religious art and the scriptures have always visualized “good” men or “gods” with an aura signifying the enlightenment. But systematic researches into the study of religious scriptures or mythologies are very limited. No doubt that various concepts have been borrowed from these mythologies. Further studies directed at decoding the “unscientific” implication and comprehension may probably benefit the larger study of human behavior and its understanding.

**Samyuktha.K**

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## FAQ - 6

### Is there a scientific explanation for parapsychology?

According to physicist John Wheeler parapsychology is considered a pseudo science as there are no scientific explanations for the topics it deals with. For e.g., telepathy, clairvoyance etc. Only qualitative research can be carried out as these phenomena cannot be perceived by the 5 senses but can only be experienced. However, there are a lot of things that cannot be explained by science, but that does not mean they don't exist.

"I don't believe in predictions through astrology. But levitations and psycho kineses can be practiced by experimenting with ones own psychic energy. Being brought up in an orthodox family with firm belief in the religious texts I believe in spirits and possessions as it is said in the Bible but most possessions are a hoax. Nothing can be made from vacuum so, no- I don't believe in materialization. As far as telepathy goes I have experienced it. Even though I am brought up in the familiar environment of Indian culture I do not believe in rebirth. I have one life and I like to experience everything in it."

**Malathi (teacher)**

"Palmistry is believed to an extent because the lines on our palms speak something about ourselves and it's different for each person. But astrology etc is just a waste of money and time and it goes against my Islamic belief. I don't believe in rebirth but I believe that if I do good deeds my children would be blessed for it. I believe in ghosts because I've heard other people talking about it but I have never had a personal encounter."

**Ibrahim (auto driver)**

"I think face reading and everything that goes with it is stupid especially in this era. But levitation and psycho kineses seems to be true as I am influenced by the Chris Angel show on 'Star World'. Movies influence me to a great extent, in believing in spirits and possessions and also I have friends who tell me about their experiences with people who are possessed. If the bond is strong between loved ones then I feel that telepathy works to an extent. I have doubts considering rebirth as the information that I have is contradictory."

**Melvin (student)**

"I blindly believe in astrology and traditional healers as my wife was healed by a taught me. For e.g., my wife was healed by a poojari. I cant raise my body but I know that saints can do it. Spirits? Of course, my relative was once possessed and only a poojari could cast out the demons. I think only magicians can move things without touching it. Only priest can bring things from thin air. If you do good then nature will give it back double, so I believe in doing good deeds"

**Rama Gowda (driver)**

"I don't believe in rebirth, spirits or possessions, or telepathy. I think 20% of palmistry and astrology is right as the predictions have come true. Levitation and spoon bending is just magic but I believe there is some logic behind them"

**Jacob (shop keeper)**

“I totally believe in demons and possessions as it is believed in my custom that if you don't mourn for someone's death irrespective of your love for them you will be possessed by their spirit. I have seen such an incident. There are places that are haunted because my brother became ill seeing apparitions of jeeps and furniture moving. For which I depend on religious healers and astrologists to avert the ill effects”

**Meenakshi** (house maid)

“I believe in astrology partially because some of the predictions have come true & I go to astrologers if the situations demands. I tend to believe in astrologers because they give me instant solutions in my stressful life. Telepathy is just a normal everyday activity. Ghosts & rebirth please is not true as there is no evidence to support it. I think everyone has a power within themselves but if they have to develop it they have to work on it like any other skill.”

**Sonali** (IT employee)

“I agree with the notions of telepathy because I have experienced it many times especially when it's concerned with my mother. However, I believe that it happens only between loved ones and it's a play of the mind. Astrology, rebirth etc are just fictions of the mind. Psycho kinesis can be done because I have seen people performing it. Levitation and materialization is debatable, according to me, because if it is used by devil worshipers it's not true but by God then yes I believe in it. I'm still confused!”

**Luke** (student)

“I completely discard the notions of astrology/palmistry and face reading as it is against my religious beliefs. But I'm confused by the concepts of spirits and possessions as I'm caught up between the two ends of spirituality and the scientific world. On a religious basis, I believe in possessions and materializations but not in black magic. However, now a days, it's mostly fraud.”

**Rebecca** (student)

“I don't believe in anything other than God. Thus, astrology, face reading and palmistry is fraud. No one can predict the future and it is all controlled by God. Rebirth happens because I have seen it in other people. I have never experienced spirits or possessions but I have heard others talking about it. I don't think levitation is real; it is just the trick of the eyes.”

**Jayamma** (flower seller)

## When distance does not matter....

Has your partner ever spoken out the same words you intended to say? Ever received a phone call, from someone you were just thinking about? Did your friend gift you the exact same dress you were dreaming about for your birthday? Such phenomena which many of us, frequently experience in everyday life might not be a coincidence after all. Telepathy, which is commonly known as 'mind reading' is one of the most well known branches of Parapsychology. The word Telepathy is derived from the Greek terms tele meaning "distant" and pathos meaning "occurrence" or "feeling". It refers to the alleged transfer of information on thoughts or feelings between individuals by means other than the five classical senses.

Interest in telepathy can be found right from the Aborigines of Australia to mesmerism to World War I. Though not scientifically proven, this field has been increasingly studied in psychical research. There are a few characteristic traits of telepathy. Like, in majority of the cases, telepathy seemed to occur in situations of high emotional intensity, involving people who share a strong emotional bond. For example, a mother is aware that her child has met with an accident even before the news actually reaches her. Research has shown that women tend to receive more telepathic messages than men; this is because they are emotionally more sensitive and they also tend to rely on their intuition. Some identical twins are also found to be telepathic. For instance, an experiment was conducted in the year 2003 by a London news channel where an 8 year old boy was made to put his hand into near freezing cold water. His identical twin brother who did not know what was happening, was wired to a polygraph. At the exact same moment when the boy dipped his hand into the water there was a sudden malfunction on the line monitoring

respiration rate of his twin brother, as though even he had experienced gasp. In addition, even animals, may sometimes display telepathic powers. An interesting experiment was conducted aboard a Russian submarine, in which newborn rabbits were taken down in the submarine. The mother who was separated from her babies was kept ashore in her laboratory with electrodes connected to her brain. Reports showed that the mother showed sharp electrical responses everytime one of her baby was killed. Distance was also not a barrier when it comes to this transfer of thoughts. In an experiment conducted during the Apollo 1V mission, an astronaut Edgar Mitchell concentrated from space on 200 sequences of 25 random numbers. Two of the four recipients placed on earth were able to guess 51 of these sequences correctly, far exceeding the mean chance of 40.

There are a few tests that have tried to prove the existence of telepathy. The most famous of them being the Ganzfeld experiment and use of zener cards. In the Ganzfeld experiment, the sender and the receiver of the telepathic signals are kept in two separate insulated rooms. The sender is shown clips or images. He has to send them telepathically to the receiver. Zener cards are cards marked with five different symbols. The sender must pick out a random card and attempt to send it to the receiver by visualizing the symbol on it. Though these tests shed some light into the process of thought transference, none of them were able to give a 100% hit rate.

Opinions have differed when it comes to believing the existence of telepathy. None of the experiments conducted so far have been able to give satisfactory answers to this phenomenon. It is therefore more associated with spiritualism and superstitions than science. One of the answers to this event is that thoughts like any other source, carry energy. This energy when concentrated on a subject will result in the transference of information. Modern science requires concrete proof for any field to be recognized. However there are some phenomena that cannot be explained rationally. Science poses many limitations in our path of solving these unsolved mysteries of life. It is therefore the belief of an individual that establish the existence of thought transference. It might as well happen to us if we choose to believe in it.

**M.Chaitra**

III BA - Journalism Psychology English

# Telepathy : A Skeptic's Outlook

Telepathy is rubbish. Explicit mind-to-mind communication does not happen, and if it did, it would be nearly useless in this age. Wikipedia defines telepathy as "the transference of thoughts or feelings between two or more subjects through Psi," and for some reason, the scientific study of telepathy and other parapsychology topics has nearly vanished in the United States, as well as in most other parts of the world, and rightfully. Experimenting with telepathy may produce interesting, coincidental observations, but to study telepathy and its potential use by humans is to search a thesaurus for a word that doesn't exist, when plenty of synonyms are already available.

Yes, most of us have seen the Zener card experiment, where one person sees a card with one of five symbols and tries to mentally project the image they see to a second person, the receiver, who can't see the card and has to guess what was on it. But even if the projector/receiver team were to consistently guess far over 20% of the cards right, thus "proving" their telepathic abilities, what's the use? They still haven't accomplished enough to communicate a sentence worth of practical, real-life information. But okay, let's say that two people can send actual, useful messages to each other. Apparently, this happens, and goes undocumented.

Some argue that telepathy, along with other subdivisions of parapsychology, is hard to study because these people who have had real telepathic experiences fear being labeled "crazy," and therefore don't report their experiences. True. Few people have had what could be perceived as telepathic experiences, and even fewer people report

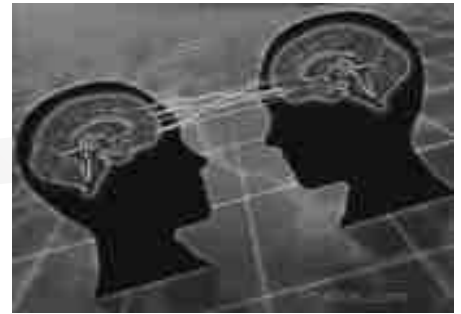
them. Since so few people experience telepathy, probability works against them and they have little chance to share their experiences. Chances are, those who do feel like sharing their experiences report them to skeptics like me, who can't relate and eventually dismiss their claims. More and more telepathy stories fall on deaf ears until the idea dies out, making telepathy's extinction an example of Social Darwinism. But this only accounts for a small part of the reason why so few resources are devoted to the scientific study of telepathy.

Mostly, scientists don't study telepathy because communicating via telepathy is impractical.

These days, scientific progress must be saleable. If your experiment isn't likely

to lead to a marketable product or service, good luck funding it. Maybe you can apply for a grant in Britain, which boasts having the most parapsychology laboratories in Europe, but other than that, no company will want to invest in a telepathy-based product. The market for such a "telepathy product" does actually exist--people would love to communicate with each other discretely and privately, and inexpensively, at long distances and at all hours, something that telepathy would be perfect for. The problem for scientists who might potentially study telepathy is that cell phone companies beat them to it. Any information that one might communicate through telepathy can already be communicated more easily, quickly, and reliably through other means, including cell phone conversations, text messages, email messages, conversations in person, drawing pictographs, and interpretive dance/dumb charades. Heck, I know people who can text without looking, so please, leave card-guessing games to stoners and people bored at parties, and spend more time trying to figure out how I can have the iPhone for cheaper.

*\*The author wishes to remain anonymous*



## Out of Mind or out of the Body?

Have you ever wondered if people are out of their minds when they claim to have had an out-of-body experience? If your answer is 'yes', you are questioning one of the most commonly experienced parapsychological phenomena which, one out of ten people have claimed to have experienced at least once in their life time.

As the phrase suggests, out-of-body experience (OBE) is an experience in which an individual perceives one's own physical body and the rest of the world from a location outside one's body.

Some researchers claim that it is due to lack of co-ordination between visual and tactile signals, while few think it to be hallucinatory in nature. On the other hand, some believe that it's due to the manoeuvre of an immortal soul while others refuse to believe in the very existence of the phenomenon. It seems to be one of those topics on which people have more information than accurate information.

It's interesting though to know that some people seek such experiences. Among them were people like Thomas Edison, the scientist and Salvador Dali, the surrealist painter. Edison sought this experience to solve problems while working on his inventions while Dali used it to get unconventional ideas which always influenced his paintings.

Some of the known types of OBEs are that which are initiated during/after sleep, Induced OBE and near death experience. In most cases, people have had an OBE when they were sick or when they were emotionally stressed while some claim to have had it when they were asleep or on the verge of sleep. It can be an immediate, spontaneous experience or can be controlled by the self when the experience is initiated by lucid dreams. The concept of astral body capable of roaming is another way to interpret OBEs.

Induced OBE includes usage of drugs to induce hallucinations and some may move into deeper levels of relaxation without losing wakefulness and then observe the experience of slipping out of their own bodies. Extreme physical labour can induce OBE as well, wherein a person after having worked feels

completely weightless and believes himself/herself to be floating outside the physical body.

Near death experience typically includes floating out of one's body, seeing deceased relatives and confronting someone really luminous. This is known because some people who claim to have experienced it, have eventually recovered while many believe that everyone experiences this before actual death. It seems unlikely, therefore that those of us living could ever understand it.

A neurophysiologist, Olaf Blanke found a possible neural basis of OBEs. According to him, it is mainly associated with lesions in the region where temporal lobe and parietal lobe of the brain come together.

Similar research was done by Michael Persinger. He studied the possible causes for OBE by applying magnetic stimulation to the right temporal lobe of the brain whose main function pertains to visuo - spatial integration and construction of the sense of the body in space.

The answer to a question like 'Is OBE some kind of a mental disorder?' is 'yes', if the phenomenon is viewed as involving psychological processes. It is usually explained in terms of 'depersonalization' and 'derealization'. To accept this approach, we need to cease viewing it as a paranormal phenomenon.

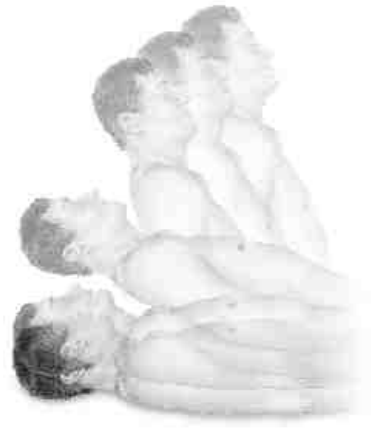
A frequently asked question pertaining OBE is, whether it is some kind of hallucination. But the difference between the drug induced hallucination and the typical spontaneous OBE is quite obvious.

The study of apparitions formed an important part of the research related to OBE. On a curious note, 'Can a person having an OBE be seen as an apparition?' The response on average, is 'yes' because there were situations in which a person having an OBE simultaneously appeared to someone as an apparition.

In conclusion, skepticism is about doubting the existence of parapsychological phenomena. Out-of-body experience entails such incredulity, but it is likely to be a phenomenon which, when once understood, is sure to open up a whole new perspective to the way we perceive the 'self'.

**N.V. Ashwini Ganig**

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# Oral Tradition, Royal Cult and Ritualistic Theatre



Paranormal phenomenon is an experience unexplainable by scientific methods or on the basis of normal experience, especially in

the mental or psychic realm. Paranormal phenomenon is seen in some form or other all over the world. Our country being a land of many castes and creeds, with numerous gods and goddesses, worshipped in various forms and in different ways, every region has developed practices and traditions unique to itself that relate to the paranormal.

In Karnataka, these practices are mostly connected with some temple deity or spirit. Each practice has its own dress code, music and dance form. The mediums are required to belong to a particular caste or sect. Strict moral code and food regulations are followed during the whole procedure. Even in these days of scientific theories and analysis, these practices are still relevant in many parts of Karnataka and attract people from all walks of life.

'Bhutada Kola' is one such paranormal phenomenon practiced mainly by the Tulu speaking people of Coastal Karnataka. Bhutha in Kannada means a ghost which frightens people with its negative powers but in Tulu, it means a spirit or 'deiva' with supernatural powers which could be both male or female, and could do both good or evil depending on how it is treated or worshipped. People believe that great heroes and heroines who lived long ago can be invoked to help those in trouble. Bhutada kola is celebrated even today with great pomp, special rituals and more than

anything else with deep faith mixed with respect. The special costume and mask woven out of tender palm leaves, the traditional accessories and weapons handed down from generations, the soul stirring nagaswara music along with the percussion instruments together create an atmosphere which is both religious and awe inspiring. As the music and dance go into a crescendo, the medium goes into a trance and answers all the questions and suggests solutions to believers who feel blessed and go home with renewed hopes.

Naga or Cobra is considered as the living god and naga worship is very common in South Kanara and Udupi districts irrespective of castes or creeds. Some sections of the society worship Naga by offering milk and tender coconuts. Some others by performing Naga Kola which is somewhat similar to Bhuthada Kola. Naga Darshana is performed by the middle class while Naga Mandala by the well to do as it is usually done



on a large scale involving a lot of expenses. The deep faith in the living god, however is deep rooted in the minds of one and all. The medium dances like a snake and people with problems ranging from infertility to skin trouble, neurological and mental problems seek the blessings of the Naga and there have been instances of miraculous cures unexplained by any scientific theory.

All over Karnataka there are many temples dedicated to Goddess Shakthi, in many forms like Marikamba, Mayamma, Chaudamma. On special festivals, goddesses are invoked who enter the body of a medium, who goes into a trance, trembling and dancing wildly. The medium is called 'Darshana Paatri'. Worshippers find solace in placing their problems before them.

Siri culture is a practice in Dakshina Karnataka which takes place every year in the months of March and April. The siri women and kumaaras assemble in the temple for procession.

They sing the siri Sandi together and get possessed and enact the siri epic. The main kumara sings the epic and the other kumaaras and siri women take the roles of the various characters in the siri epic. A mentally or physically ill person is made to listen to the kumara, who narrates a part of the Siri epic. The ill person is asked to identify with one of the characters in the epic. If the person can identify, the kumara is said to be successful in his initial effort. Later if the patient can recite one line of her character in the epic then the initial work of the kumara ends and the person is admitted into the siri group.

There is a holy man who lives in Puttaparthi in Karnataka state. The residents of



Siri Festival

Puttaparthi found him sitting under a neem tree. He has been credited with performing many miracles. From his appearance he does not seem to be an Indian and it is presumed he came from a foreign country. Though his official name is Maharishi Thamassananda Yogi some of the locals refer to him as Firangi Baba due to his appearance. The most remarkable thing about the holy man is he seems to emit some kind of light. This appears as a sort of halo around his head. A picture was taken of the baba to test if the halo appears on



Kumara & Siri

photographic film. The halo seems to have gained intensity in the photograph.

We also find many who are involved in the use and practice of black magic. In Kannada it is also referred to as 'mata-manthra'. Considered a type of magic which draws its powers from evil forces it is generally used to cause harm, injure or cause misfortune to other people or to gain power and wealth. Black magic is generally tagged as an evil practice but sometimes it can be used for the good as well as to kill an illness.

Some read minds with the help of numerology and conch shells known as 'Kavade Prashne' and promise solutions to every kind of problem physical, mental or emotional and family disputes or money matters. The solution can be in the form of eating Prasad given by the astrologer, offering pooja's to a particular god or having a taveez on the body.

These beliefs are strengthened by coincidences, there is no scientific explanation for these phenomena. However people continue to believe in such events to hold on to hope in life. When things go wrong and there is no evident cause for it, people turn to such paranormal phenomenon's for answers. Proof for such events exists in people's experiences. There are many instances where these paranormal phenomena and worship to the various spirits have solved many problems but to what extent these solutions can actually be attributed to these phenomena is still uncertain.

**Nisha Rao**

I M.Sc. Psychology

# Pranic Healing :

## The Umbrella of Energy Healing

**“Healing,” Papa would tell me, “is not a science, but the intuitive art of wooing nature.” W.H. Auden**

Pranic Healing is a completely non-touch, vibrational healing modality. It greatly accelerates the natural healing process and has proven helpful for chronic and acute physical ailments as well as emotional and psychological disorders. Pranic Healing, introduced in 1993, was developed at the Institute of Inner Studies in the Philippines by Grandmaster Choa Kok Sui, a man with a rare depth of knowledge relating to the human energy field. His research, development and refinement of Pranic Healing, which excludes the use of drugs or touch, has extended more than two decades.

Pranic Healing is invaluable for health maintenance and prevention of ailments. It is not intended to displace orthodox medical treatment, but rather to complement it. It is a highly developed, and tested system that utilizes “prana” to balance, harmonize and transform the body's energy processes. “Prana” is a Sanskrit word that means “life-force”. This invisible bio-energy or vital energy keeps the body alive and maintains a state of good health. In acupuncture, the Chinese refer to this subtle energy as “Chi”.

Pranic healing is based on two laws: the law of self-recovery and the law of prana or life energy. These laws are obvious but strangely they are usually the least noticed or least remembered by most people. It is through these basic laws that rapid healing occurs. Pranic Healers work on the energy



of the body (aura) and the energy points on the aura (chakras). Every chakra is responsible for a part or process in the body. It is through the chakras and aura that prana or life energy is absorbed and distributed throughout the whole physical and mental body. By cleaning out the chakras and putting in healing energy, the body can start restoring itself.

There is nothing supernatural about pranic healing. It is simply based on natural laws that most people are not aware of. Scientific evidence provides tangible proof of the existence of the energy body and its relation to the health and well-being of the physical body. This has been termed as the “bioplasmic body” from the word “bio” meaning life, and “plasma”, the forth state of matter after solids, liquids and gases. Scientific experiments conducted by the eminent Russian scientist, Semyon Kirlian, using ultrasensitive photographic process showed a colorful, radiant energy field surrounding the physical bodies of humans, animals and plants. This energy field, or aura, interpenetrates the visible physical body, extending about 4 to 5 inches from the skin's surface. Experiments in Kirlian photography have also revealed that diseased energies appear first in the energy body before manifesting as a physical ailment.

**Aswathy Anand**

II M.Sc. Psychology

*(The author has undergone the first 2 courses in Pranic healing)*

# Parapsychology Revised and Criticized

The modern paradigms of science and its applications have accounted for millions of theories that stand as a testimony for how a crude phenomenon can be justified. The nature of science and its scope have been associated in various inter-related disciplines, under which psychology stands at a premium level of investigation. When we talk about the rigor of methods used in psychology and its relation to science, empirical evidence, logical reasoning and other proponents that would otherwise support an assumption are critically analyzed. Once they have been validated, we have a successful way towards developing a theory. However there are some branches of the same discipline that work on more of a pseudo-scientific orientation. The field of parapsychology talks about paranormal phenomena accounted for on less than concrete evidence without substantiating its credibility.

Broadly, the field of Parapsychology is a branch of psychology which is the study of "psychic phenomena" or effects inexplicable by traditional concepts of natural law. It deals with the concepts, such as that of extra sensory perception, telekinesis, mystic or faith healing, occult sciences of some helping nature or any and many other numerous endeavours that seem to have 'apparent' explanations, but have little or no scientific basis. The methodologies of this field of study have been questioned, or rather have remained controversial for decades, right from its

conception. Yet it still enthralls the layman, and projects its potential vulnerabilities by playing on the common man's lack of understanding. It is formulated on grounds of paranormal functioning of many internal and external components, both material and immaterial to the human existence. These have been dramatically exposed as the only causal factor for the occurrence of an inexplicable event.

Let's take a few examples. A very common term associated with mystical healing is Alchemy, a form of philosophical and magical chemistry often thought of as having as its ultimate goal the philosopher's stone, a key by which the transmutation of base metals and common elements into precious ones might be achieved. In the same way can eternal life be achieved. This overrated concept has given rise to many speculations in philosophy about human existence and occult sciences that has been utilized or at least attempts have been made to account for spiritual healing and recovery from some sort of illness.

Applications of faith healing have been contradicted several times, based on scientific reasoning and validation. For example, Pranic Healing, which involves manipulating what healers called cosmic durable components within our bodies. These components supposedly make us function and connect us with the intrinsic and extrinsic world enabling us to deal with life. To defend their principles, healers have used salt water treatments and crystal embedded therapy to try and create a convulsion within our minds and bodies, alternating and modifying levels of natural energies. Such a healing process involves holistic connections between the mind and the body, which no other discipline with a scientific orientation has accounted for.

**Parapsychology involves natural - holistic - psychic conceptualizations of what simply appears to be a radical pseudo-science that has been around for several decades.**

Many other forms of healing and therapy, like mantra based healing, artifact

healing, crystal therapy etc. have not provided a reasoning behind their validation so far and yet make a considerable number of claims to fame in the field of alternative medicine. The concept of faith healing has many a times stirred

controversies while attempting to defend its principles and course of treatment. Simple elements of its healing process, like holy rituals, exorcism, spirits, potions that are a part of the occult sciences, have been the building blocks of its theology. Inevitably their methodology has been criticized, thus generating meek amounts of valid and reliable data and results.

Another component of Parapsychology talk about object mobility without physical assistance. More commonly known as Psycho-kinesis, it is the moving of matter by alleged mental energy, without any physical contact between the subject and the object or the use of any intervening consideration such as mechanical, electrical etc. Many alternative practitioners have demonstrated this concept, at least partially. But once again, when asked about the basis underlying beliefs and actions, their answers are restricted to radiant emission or unidentifiable energy allegedly exuded from an etheric force. Parapsychology involves natural - holistic - psychic conceptualizations of what simply appears to be a radical pseudo-science that has been around for several decades. In today's times of research and validation, this discipline has yet to carve a niche for itself!

**Attri Sen**

I M.Sc. Psychology

# Children of the Dead

The silence of the night is broken by the  
voice of the child,  
He speaks so soft, he whispers into my ear,  
so mild,  
He takes my hand, I'm woken, this is no dream,  
I wasn't to, I try, but I cannot scream.

I hear some more voices, his friends are here,  
Their lifeless eyes smile at me,  
I'm scared, and my body quakes with fear.

Don't be afraid they say,  
We are the children of the dead  
And since we have no place to stay,  
We live here, beneath your bed.

Lost for words, I look around and seek my  
sweet escape,  
I'm living my worst nightmare, while I'm still  
awake  
Enveloped by darkness, left with no place to  
go,  
"Won't you stay? Won't you play?",  
I hear their voices echo.  
"Won't you fill our empty stomachs?  
We have no food to eat".

And then one voice rises above the rest,  
With bloodshot eyes and a devoured chest,  
"We are the children of the dead,  
Won't you be our supper bread?"

I feel a rush of blood through me,  
The innocence of evil smiles, I see.  
And then I feel myself fall beside my bed,  
And now I too have become  
A child of the dead.

**Rounak Belliapa**

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## Dawariyyah : Coming Full Circle

Reincarnation is a very complex phenomenon; a metaphysical belief in Eastern religions that has been there for many centuries. Reincarnation literally means, "to be made flesh again". Ancient Greek philosophers like Socrates, Pythagoras and Plato entertained the concept of reincarnation. Several ancient sources affirm that Pythagoras could actually remember his past life. This doctrine is the central tenet within a majority of Indian religious traditions such as Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism. The Buddhist concept of rebirth, however, significantly differed from the prevalent concept and firmly expressed that there is no "self" or "soul" to reincarnate. Mainstream Islam rejects this concept, but there are a few Sufi groups which believe in *dawriyyah* (meaning: circles) which has many points in common with reincarnation. They also claim that it has been mentioned in the Holy Book, The Quran. The overwhelming majority of mainstream Christian denominations reject the notion of rebirth and past life.

### REINCARNATION AND HINDUISM

It wouldn't be wrong to say that reincarnation and rebirth forms the core of Hinduism. When spoken of reincarnation, the first thing that comes to mind is "Dashavataras". According to Hindu mythology, Lord Vishnu went through the process of reincarnation and all these forms i.e. Matsya (the fish), Kurma (the turtle), Varaha (the boar), Narasimha (half human half lion), Vaamana (the dwarf Brahmin) Parashuram (the warrior sage), Rama ( the Prince of Ayodhya), Krishna (the Prince of Dwarka), Buddha (the King of Kapilavastu) and Kalki (the warrior; yet to appear) has had a specific purpose and a legend to it.

The concept of reincarnation is mentioned in Bhagavad Gita. According to this Holy Book, this has two main aspects, the *Jivatma* and the *Paramatma*. The *atman* is spiritual, imperishable and eternal as God himself is eternal; it is neither born nor can it die. The *atman* is born in different forms be it a dog or an insect or a beggar or a prosperous human based on the good deeds or the bad deeds done by one in his previous births. The deeds done by one is called *karma*. Based on the sins committed or noble deeds done by one, the next birth is decided by fate. The *karma* affects only the *jiva* and not the *atman* when one dies. Hence, when one dies, the body perishes but not the soul. "Just as man takes off his old clothes in order to put on new ones, so does the one (soul) who lives in the body, by abandoning the old form, enters into other forms prepared for it" (2.22 Bhagavad Gita).

"Just as death is certain for all that is born, so is certain birth for all that dies" (2.26-27 Bhagavad Gita).

The soul reincarnates again and again on Earth till it is free of all the sins committed and is 'perfect'. It is only when one is free of sins does the *atman* reunites with the source, the *paramatma*. The Gita affirms that one who does good works will be born in a good family of saints and spiritual men, and after having reached perfection through various rebirths, he will reach his final goal (*moksha*). But once if the soul reaches Heaven after the good deeds, life may be longer and *jiva* may enjoy extreme pleasures but it would not last forever. Once *karma* is exhausted, the *jiva* is thrown back from the heights of heavenly glory into the turmoil of unstable life on earth.



Girish Kasaravalli

Today, this fundamental concept of Hinduism is finding many believers all over the world. Firstly, a great mass of evidence is gathering in favor of reincarnation through personal experiences of many who by chance happen to remember their past lives and were able to record experiences in stunning details. Reincarnation does seem to offer an explanation for some strange phenomena such as the ability of some people to regress to a past life under hypnosis. For example, in the case of

child prodigies, it can be claimed that unlike most cases of reincarnation where the soul has to more or less start from scratch, the child prodigy somehow gets a soul with great carryover from a previous life, giving it a decided advantage over the rest of us. Reincarnation could explain why bad things happen to good people and why good things happen to bad people: they are being rewarded or punished for actions in past lives (*karma*). One could explain déjà vu experiences by claiming that they are memories of past lives. Dreams could be interpreted as a kind of soul travel and soul memory. Many psychic masters like Edgar Cayce confirmed beyond doubt that reincarnation is not just a theory or imagination, but a definite reality.

A novel by Santeshivara Lingannaiah Bhyrappa *Nayi Neralu* is based on the same lines. He talks about the rebirth of a man who claims to remember his past life. *Nayi Neralu* means the shadow of a dog. As mentioned in Swargarohana Parva of *Mahabharatha*, dog was the only being which followed Yudhishtir, the eldest of the Pandavas till the end. Here the dog symbolically represents *karma*. This book has also been made into a classic movie by the same title directed by Girish



A still from *Nayi Neralu*

Kasaravalli. In the movie, Kasaravalli sidesteps the predictable dialectics of faith versus reason, tradition versus modernity. Instead, what he evokes is a complex web of emotional need and societal pressure, of human vulnerability and strength working their way through the overarching forces of philosophical beliefs, the implacable weight of orthodoxy and the slowly grinding wheels of social change. Shot in just 42 days, the movie drowns you in the piercing smells of lush woodlands and the island breezes of South Kanara. Kasaravalli presents a chiaroscuro of emotions tumultuous, contradictory, deceptive and self-deceptive. Almost like the idea of reincarnation itself.

**Veena K.**

I M.Sc. Psychological Counselling

## FAQ - 7

### Is there any cultural differences in perceiving Parapsychology?

Parapsychology is accepted in both eastern and western cultures. With the dawn of the New Age Movement, people in the west became more aware of the paranormal phenomenon. It was found that 9 out of 10 people in the US believe in paranormal activity. Thus most literary work emerged from the western culture. In the east conceptions of psychical phenomenon are more acceptable as they are believed to be common occurrences. For eg., rebirth, possessions etc.

# It's All About Telepathy

*Miles away from home,  
I was shedding tears all alone.  
I missed my family and friends,  
Amidst all the plights and pretends.  
From no where I got a call  
Grandpa was asking why I was crying,  
And to mention the reason all.*

*Months ago, went for an excursion,  
Fell down and was in bad pain sensation.  
My grandfather at home felt uneasy  
Forced my mother to call me in immediacy.  
I tried to hide it  
But I could hear my Grandpa  
Strong in belief, and command high  
He disclosed he could hear my sigh*

Two knights met near the graveyard  
in the night.  
One said, "I don't believe in ghosts".  
The other said "Oh!" and disappeared.

**Ashwini K.**  
I BA - Journalism Psychology English

## Near to Death

*Uncanny night it was,  
I felt I was lifted up,  
But then I saw my body right there  
It was so uneasy and a dreadful fear.  
I could view everything straight  
Which was so pleasant to sight  
I could feel I was travelling up through the tunnel  
And entering a world that was so unusual  
It appeared as though,  
I was approaching death for sure.  
Suddenly, I regained my senses  
And pulled myself to realize the happenings.*

Poems by  
**Debasmita Guha**  
I BA - Journalism Psychology English

# Understanding Parapsychology the Punmohan Singh Way

The following is the PUNMOHAN SINGH'S lecture on parapsychology. According to him, parapsychology is the study of people who see something unusual which others can't see.

## SYMPTOMS:

1. Experience supernatural powers
2. See loved ones who are dead
3. Hear messages from unknown souls

## CAUSES:

1. People who take drugs (hashish, afeem, ganja etc.)
2. People who heard lots of horror stories from their grandmother when they were kids.
3. People who watch too much of Ram Gopal Verma's movies

## TREATMENT:

1. Tell them to stop taking drugs.
2. Tell them that most of the stories they heard from their grandmothers are false.
3. Do not allow people to watch Ram Gopal Verma's movies.
4. Expose them to more of Madhur Bandarkar's movies.

**Harish P.**

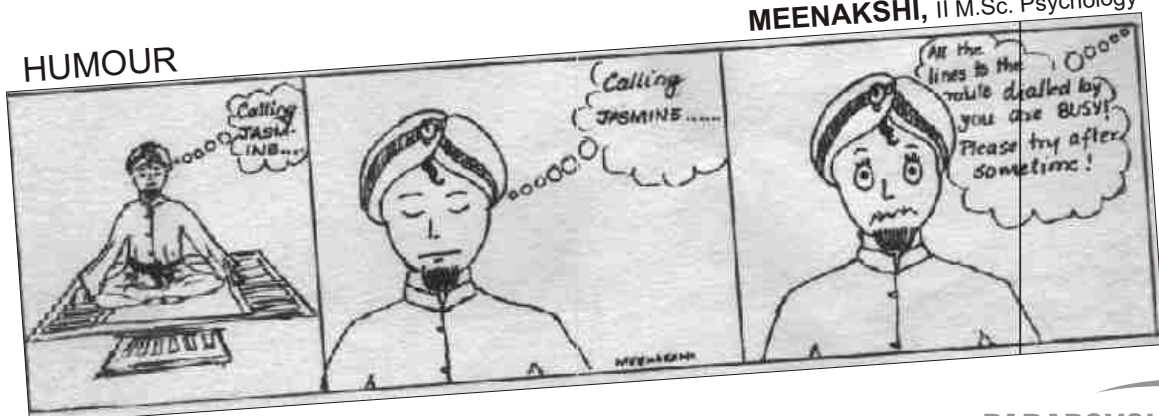
I BA - Journalism Psychology English

## FAQ - 8

### Do animals have 6th sense?

What humans perceive as an extra sense, in animals it is considered natural phenomenon. Oscar, a cat in a US nursing home, is reportedly able to sense when residents of the home are about to die. The prophetic feline apparently curls up next to patients in their final hours and has so far been correct in 25 cases. It is present not only in highly evolved animals like dogs and cats but in lower order animals too. Experiments have been carried out in canines, felines and rodents.

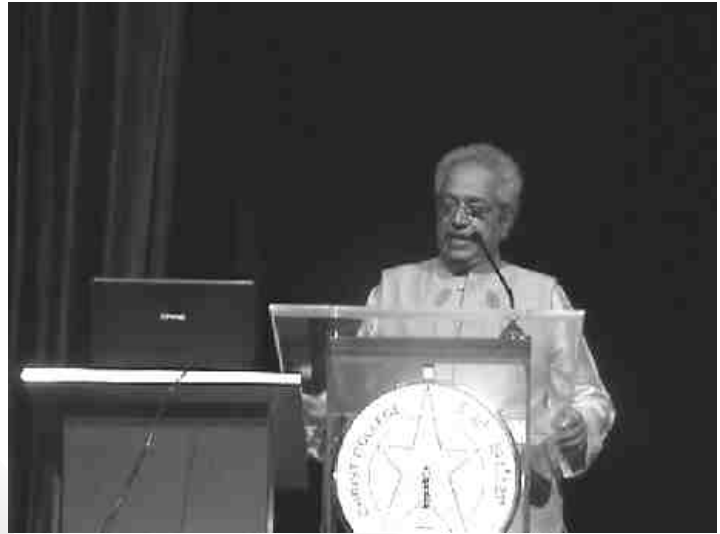
## HUMOUR



MEENAKSHI, II M.Sc. Psychology

# Report of the National Conference on Psychology and Cinema : Exploring the Psyche On and Off Screen

The National Conference titled “Psychology and Cinema: exploring the psyche on and off screen” was conducted by Christ College on 14th, 15th & 16th February 2008. The Conference was inaugurated by Dr. Ashok Nagpal, Professor, Dept. of Psychology, Delhi University. The resource persons were Dr. Ashok Nagpal, Dr Sudhir Kakar, Mr. Hariharan, Dr. Anup Dhar, Dr. V.C. Harris, Dr. Juma Basak, Dr. C.S. Venkiteswaran, Mr K. G. George, Dr. Asish Rajadhyaksha, Dr. Honey Oberoi, Dr. Mohan Agashe and Dr. Anita Ghai, Mr. Chandrasekhar, Dr. Ashok Pai and Ms. Nithya Nagaraj.



**Dr. Sudhir Kakar speaking on Cultural Psyche and Cinema**

The first day of the conference was marked by film festival. Nine movies were screened in the three concurrent sessions. Each movie is introduced and analyzed by discussants who were the experts from different fields. On the following days, symposia were held-Cultural Psyche & Cinema, Psychology behind Music, Dance and Technology in Cinema, Visual Pleasures in Narrative Cinema: The Viewer's Psyche, and Movies on the Mind. The panel discussion on the third day was on Social Responsibility of the Film Maker. Each session was rich in information and interaction.

Bangalore; NIMH, Secunderabad; Montfort College, Bangalore; Kerala University; Govt. Women's College, Trivandrum and Asianet, Trivandrum; Cinekitchen, Bangalore; Sukruth, Bangalore; Robert Bosch Engineering and Business Solutions, Bangalore; PPC, Bangalore; Center for the Study of Culture and Societies, Bangalore; School of Letters; M.G. University; L.V.Prasad Film & TV Academy, Chennai; Suchitra Film Society & Bangalore Film Society, Bangalore; Jesus & Mary College, New Delhi; Central Board of Film Certification, Bangalore and School of Media Studies, Cochin.

The Conference provided an interdisciplinary platform for discussing various issues related to Psychology and Cinema. According to the experts' reflection, it was the first Conference in India to connect Psychology and Cinema in an academic point of view. In that sense it was a historical event which opened up new avenues. The conference has added research interest in the area of cultural psyche and cinema. Students are sensitized with various contemporary issues related to Psychology & Cinema thereby widening their research horizons. It helped film makers to understand the cultural and psychological issues that will reflect in the upcoming cinemas as well as sensitized the public about the important role of interrelationship of Psychology & Cinema.

Scientific papers presentations and interactive poster sessions were held on the 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> and participants present were from diverse educational institutions, NGOs and film institutes. The faculty, students and researchers from the following institutions participated - NTNU University, Norway; Womens' Christian College, Chennai; Delhi University; Bangalore University; NIMHANS,

## Movie Review : Phoonk

Phoonk is one of the latest Hindi movies that focuses on paranormal phenomenon. The main stars are Sudeep, Anaitha Khanivkar, Shrey Bawa, Kenny Desai and Lillette Dubey. This movie is directed by Ram Gopal Verma and produced by Azam Khan and Nischol.

Phoonk, an interesting flick by RGV released on August 22 this year. It deals with black magic and fear. The movie is based on the protagonist, Rajeev, an atheist who believes in science and technology. But owing to the emotionally churning experiences of his family members and consequently his own, he begins to believe in God, black magic and their relative power and influence on human life. Thus, the movie slogan: Its superstition till you experience it. The hero had a happy go lucky life with close emotional bonding with each of his family members. Rajeev's trusted employee couple try to cheat him on one of his construction projects. When Rajeev becomes aware of their deceit he immediately fires them. The couple in order to take revenge use black magic and Voodoo on Raksha, Rajeev's daughter. In the course Rajeev, who does not initially believe in these superstitious practices starts believing in them after his daughter is cured by a tantrik.

The star cast of the film despite being of a low profile has performed remarkably. The background score was effective in scaring the audience... or at least now and then. Nonetheless, inspite of RGV's claims that Phoonk is the scariest of his movies till date, the movie failed to stand up to his claim. At the least, the movie has attacked science, medicine and its blind usage in the field of healing. It attempts to make it clear that science cannot explain everything. Aspects like Telepathy, Clairvoyance, Black magic,



Voodoo are still untouched by the scientific explanations and are obviously beyond our control. But alas! Psychology has tried to explain these concepts in its vast discourse and failed. If human beings could explain everything and consequently control it, one could be called GOD. The Divine Maker, thus, has left us pondering on events and ideas that just cannot be sliced and diced into perfect pieces by the human mind... hence making us perfectly human!!

**M.Afreen Rizba**

II M.Sc. Psychological Counselling

### FAQ - 9

#### Does everybody have an aura?

All living things have auric light, which can be seen or sensed by some psychics. Its colours and brightness tell us about the vitality, health and emotional state of a person. Thoughts and memories are all contained in its field, and through the aura telepathy takes place.

# The Fourth Dimension

It was the day before Mother's Day, 1981 and her family had a large beautifully wrapped present for Rose by the fireplace. Every time she walked by it, she wondered what it could be. Then all of a sudden, she saw it completely unwrapped and she knew what it was. She was stunned and quickly took a second look. This time it was completely gift wrapped again. She told her family she saw right through the gift wrap and knew what it was. Her husband laughed and said she couldn't know because it was something new in the market and he didn't think she even knew about it. The next day before she unwrapped it, she said "What I saw was a foot massager". Her husband's jaw dropped. It was indeed a foot massager.

This experience called clairvoyance means "clear sight" into another dimension - the fourth dimension. It just happened to Rose, she could not do it at will. She wondered what caused it, and why it happens only occasionally, she recalled other experiences. As she reflected on this experience, it brought to mind many times when she was equally accosted by clairaudient (clear- hearing) experiences. When she was a child after her parents were asleep, she heard both voices and music in her room at night that seemed to be coming from nowhere.

Once, when she was in her 20s she heard a beautiful piano concerto coming from the living room in the middle of the night. She lay there enjoying it quite a while before she woke up enough to realize it was coming out of nowhere and she felt frightened at the thought. She said, "Oh no, I am scared. Please stop." And at that she heard the conductor rap his baton on his stand, the music stopped, she heard all the music books shut, and there was silence.

She felt she was truly fortunate to hear such glorious music from another dimension.

Subsequently she looked forward to such encounters. She could ever experience them at will, but she does learn that she could communicate with the musicians by thought, and if she asked them to repeat any section, they would. She had been a music major in college, a singer and composer, so she began to memorize sections of music to write down and succeeded.

Probably the most outstanding example of such experiences was the time she heard the loveliest duet in her dream. A princess was having her hair brushed by a handmaiden and they were seated on a rock at the edge of a small lake in a great forest. A handsome prince approached, singing in his glorious baritone. "You are my music". The princess joined him in song... Rose was entranced by the scene as well as the music. She wrote it down, entered it in a composer's contest, and won the first prize in ballads.

Some times for a moment, we are transported into the fourth dimension. The physical plane about us is three-dimensional sense of height, breadth and thickness. We are at the surface of all things but cannot perceive the hidden side which is the interior from our exterior point of view. So the fourth dimension is the unseen of what we see and it is also an aspect of mind and a dimension we experience in dreams.

Most of us at one time or another have experienced seeing something "out of the corner of the eye" and then realized that nothing is there. For a brief moment, we may very well have seen something in the fourth dimension. Where is that? The fourth dimension is the astral plane that interpenetrates our physical plane, but which is usually invisible to us on our three dimensional level. This is where thought forms exist. This "unseen side of things" is seen only with the mind's eye.



We tune into the fourth dimension when the sense organs of our astral or etheric body is awakened. The physical body is an exact copy of the etheric counterpart, which encircles us and extends several feet from the shape of the physical. It is the etheric body that determines the shape of the physical one, by one its lines of force. All through life, it rebuilds and restores the physical. Any physical problem is preceded in the etheric body. When they do, the etheric draws in closer to the physical. We sense this weakened energy field around those who are afflicted. The etheric body remains whole even if the physical has had an amputation. Amputees have attested that they are aware of their etheric counterpart when a limb is removed-they feel it as though it was still there.

It is not unusual to sense another person's etheric body. If you move your hands closer to, but not touching, another person's hand, or even your own, you will feel a slight sensation as etheric touches etheric. This etheric body has its own sense organs called 'chakras', which are the vehicles that attune as to the fourth dimension. They are like coloured lotuses, with movement so slight as to be undetectable. But when activated, each petal opens as they vibrate. Through their unfolding comes, the gift of seeing into the fourth dimension (clairvoyance), or hearing (clairaudience) and a higher awareness.

Sometimes children are born with their chakras open and they can see and hear equally well in both worlds. They talk to and play with play mates who are unseen by us, but very real to them. When we understand the laws of vibration, we cannot help but realize the power we have in our thoughts. The ideas we entertain and create take form in the fourth dimensional plane and will become realities here if we give them enough power. We give them power when we think of them with emotional intensity

that it becomes ingrained in our soul. In a given amount of time, that "seed" will germinate into a force that will either spur us to action to accomplish, or, if a negative thought, will take hold in the etheric body, and then manifest itself in the physical body.

Another aspect of the fourth dimension is that of predictions. All through history people have wanted to know what the future has in store. Priests built high towers so that they could study the changing sky. They plotted the courses of the visible planets, drew up the Zodiac, and related all the world's happenings to the stars. Astrology became a popular science, especially with regard to the forecasting of events. Today there are many seers who foresee what takes place in the fourth dimension before it is manifested here. They must be careful not to make judgments and predict a negative event as a fact, for ultimately it is man who makes a choice that can change a course of events.

Our thoughts, what we think about, read about, look at- are all fourth- dimensional, and all is initiated on that plane before it manifests on our third-dimensional physical plane. This will be perfectly clear to the spiritual-minded, for the higher can understand the lower, but the lower cannot understand the higher. This is potent stuff. We are working with the power of creation we are able to draw from The Eternal, where all ideas exist, by tuning in with our higher mind to the fourth dimension... and beyond.

**Dona George**

I BA - Journalism Psychology English

## FAQ - 10

**How do people rise above the ground level in meditation?**

This is known as levitation in parapsychology. Some physicists think that levitation could be the result of the mind "tapping into" the zero point energy in an altered state of consciousness. Some scientists think that fine structures in the neurons called microtubules are capable of tapping into quantum mechanical processes and performing quantum computation, which could possibly provide a means of tapping into the zero point energy.

# Calender of Events

June - November 2008

- ☐ **Inauguration of Psychology Association** on 9<sup>th</sup> July.
- ☐ **Film Club activities:** Screening and reviewing of the movies-
  - 'The Tracker' (Director-Rolf de Heer) on 12<sup>th</sup> July moderated by Mr. Georgekutty, Secretary, Bangalore Film Society
  - 'Sybil' (Director: Daniel Petrie) on 31<sup>st</sup> July
  - 'Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge' (Director: Robert Enrico) on 10<sup>th</sup> September
- ☐ A workshop by Dr. Anup Dhar, Associate Fellow, CPCS, Bangalore on **Lacanian Turn** for II M.Sc. Psychology & M.Sc. Psychological Counselling students on 17<sup>th</sup> July.
- ☐ A workshop by Dr. Sudha Bhogle, Head of student solutions at Eduquity Career Technologies Pvt. Ltd, Bangalore on **Assessment** for II M.Sc. Psychology students on 18<sup>th</sup> July.
- ☐ A **Clinical Case Conference** for I & II M.Sc. Psychological counseling students presented by Ms. Shweta A.Rao, moderated by Dr. Tony Sam George on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2008 and by Ms. Navya B.L.moderated By Dr. Mathew Thomas on 25<sup>th</sup> July.
- ☐ **Clinical Case Conference** for I and II M.Sc. Psychology students presented by Ms. Avani on 25<sup>th</sup> July, chaired by Mr. Diptarup Chowdhury.
- ☐ A workshop on **Ethical issues in social psychology research** by Ms. Payal Shah was held for I MSc. Psychology students on 1<sup>st</sup> August.
- ☐ **In- house faculty presentation on the effect of ADHD on treatment seeking substance abusers** by Mr. K.N. Jayakumar on 2<sup>nd</sup> August.
- ☐ Guest lecture on **Pranic Healing** by Ms. Swarnalatha Iyer for II MSc Psychological Counseling on 6<sup>th</sup> August.
- ☐ **Field visit** for II M.Sc. Psychological Counseling to Prajna Institute of Yoga & Allied Sciences, Bangalore on 8<sup>th</sup> August, conducted by Ms. Tissy Mariam Thomas.
- ☐ A Seminar on **Psychotherapy Process Research: Some Uncertain Issues** by Dr. Jayanti Basu, Professor, Calcutta University on 11<sup>th</sup> August for II M.Sc. Psychology students.
- ☐ A **panel discussion on can parents be responsible for negligent acts by adolescents?** by Mr. Anirban Sengupta, Lecturer in Sociology, Mr. Diptarup Chowdhury, Lecturer in Psychology, Mr. Karthik Iyer, II FEP & Ms. Lavanya, II FEP on 12<sup>th</sup> August.
- ☐ **Sensitization programme on transgenders and HIV positives** on 28<sup>th</sup> August.
- ☐ **Village Exposure Trip to Hoskote** for II BA(PSEng) students coordinated by Ms. Sheena Mathew and Mr. Stephen on 28<sup>th</sup> August.
- ☐ **Staff developmen programme for security personnel** of Christ University held on 28<sup>th</sup> August by Mr. K.N Jayakumar.
- ☐ A seminar on **The Neuropsychological deficits in chronic mental illness** for M.Sc. Psychology students moderated by Dr. Miriam and a **Book Review on 'Contracts in Counseling'** moderated by Dr. Tony Sam George on 29<sup>th</sup> August.

- ☐ A Seminar on **The Therapeutic Frame in Counseling and Psychotherapy** chaired by Dr. Mathew Thomas held on 29<sup>th</sup> August for I and II MSc Psychological Counseling students.
- ☐ Interaction on **Career Opportunities in HR** by Mr. Vinod Venkiteswaran, HR Personnel, HCL, Bangalore for III BA students on 30<sup>th</sup> August.
- ☐ Guest Lecture on **Pranayama** by Ms. Mallika Krishnaswami for II M.Sc Psychological Counseling on 2<sup>nd</sup> September.
- ☐ Annual Exhibition on '**Comparative psychology**' on 2<sup>nd</sup> September
- ☐ **Field visit** to Rajendranagar slum for I M.Sc. Psychological Counseling students on 5<sup>th</sup> September and for I M.Sc. Psychology students on 19<sup>th</sup> September.
- ☐ Guest lecture for II M.Sc Psychological Counseling on **Asanas** by Mr. Jini K. Gopinath on 5<sup>th</sup> September.
- ☐ Guest lecture on **Holistic Healing** for M.Sc II Psychology & M.Sc Psychological Counseling students by Dr.Shridi Prasad Tekur on 8<sup>th</sup> September.
- ☐ **Critical Psychology Study Group** on 9<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> September by facilitated by Dr.Anup Dhar, CSCS Bangalore.
- ☐ Two-day workshop on **Human Sexuality and Life Skills** by Dr.Sangeeta Saxena, Director of Enfold Trust for I M.Sc Psychology and Counseling students held on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of September.
- ☐ Guest Lecture on **Preparing for the vocational life** for III BA (PSEco) students by Ms. Divya Bhatnagar, Qualitative Research Analyst, A.C. Neilson on 13<sup>th</sup> September.
- ☐ A Seminar on **Dynamics of Gender, Class and Ethnicity** by Professor Ivory L Lyons, Jr.,(Mount Union College, Ohio) for all the postgraduate psychology students on 15<sup>th</sup> September.
- ☐ Guest Lecture on **Employee Assistance Programme and Workplace Counseling** by Ms.Isabel Martina Paul, Practise Director, South Asia and Middle East, Bangalore on 19<sup>th</sup> September for M.Sc. Psychological Counseling & MBA- HR students.
- ☐ Guest Lecture on **Psychopharmacology** by Dr.Mohan Sunil Kumar, Consultant Psychiatrist on 19<sup>th</sup> September for M.Sc. Psychology students.
- ☐ Guest lecture on **Paradigms of Psychological knowledge: historical and cross cultural perspective** for M.Sc Psychology students by Dr.Suneet Varma, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Delhi University on 22<sup>nd</sup> September.
- ☐ Panel discussion on **Issues and debates on Qualitative Psychology** by Mr.Anirban Sengupta, lecturer in Sociology and Mr.Anil Pinto lecturer in Media Studies for MSc Psychology students on 23<sup>rd</sup> September.
- ☐ **Suicide prevention day where the beauty and value of life is celebrated on campus** on 24<sup>th</sup> September
- ☐ **Journal Review** by Ms.Sudharshana Gupta, moderated by Jini .K. Gopinath and by Ms.Cathlyn Niranjana Bennett, moderated by Mr.Baiju Gopal on 26<sup>th</sup> September.

## Announcements

### **National Workshop on Neuro-Linguistic Programming and Semantics:**

**Application in Teaching and Practice of Mental Health** (7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> November 2008)

The workshop would concentrate on the NLP Communication model and Neuro-Semantics. The resource person, Mr. John Hunter-Murray, is an independent Executive Coach and Trainer. He is an accredited Trainer in Neuro-Linguistic Programming and Neuro-Semantics.

For further details contact: nwnlp@psy.christuniversity.edu

### **National Paper Presentation Competition**

(11<sup>th</sup> December 2008)

The Department of Psychology is organizing a paper presentation competition for undergraduate students of psychology.

For further details contact: nppe@psy.christuniversity.in

### **National Conference on Changing Fabrics of Intimate Relationships- Theories and Practices in Mental Health**

(13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2009)

The Department of Psychology, Christ University is organizing a two-day National Conference revolving around the themes of family structures in transition, culture and diversity issues in intimacy, challenges to parenting, alternative sexualities, emerging concept of intimacies work and cyber space, current challenges to mental health practice, evolving training needs in mental health, intimacies in therapeutic relationship, IT and changing human relationships.

For further details contact : cfr2008@psy.christuniversity.in

### **Masters in Organizational Psychology** (June 2009)

The Department of Psychology, Christ University is also introducing a post-graduate programme in Organizational Psychology in June 2009. The highlights of the programme will be on-the-job training, focused research projects, expert interactions, training lab, seminars, workshops, campus placements.

For further details contact: www.christuniversity.in

## Letters to the Editor

*We are very happy to include comments of our readers on our previous issue (Vol.2 Issue 3- December '07-May '08) focusing on Psychology and Cinema.*

Sir/Madam,

Thank you for sending the latest issue of the Perspective related to psychology and cinema. I have enjoyed reading the same and shall share it with the interested persons.

**P. H. Lodhi**, Ph. D.

Professor & Head, Department of Psychology,  
University of Pune, Pune- 411 007

Sir/Madam,

It is really nice to read the articles of Perspective Magazine's special issue "Psychology and Cinema". The theories that we learn in psychology becomes very dry and we forget after sometime when we don't get the opportunity to observe it; although observation is very important in psychology. I watched a movie 'West Side Story' and after watching it I understood the topics of group processes and group conflict much better. Movies can also be a good medium to spread awareness and goodwill among large number of people.

I would like to say that we can use cinema and literature to understand psychology much better and also make the classes more interesting. I am also eagerly looking forward to your next issue on Parapsychology.

**Sanasam Priyadarshini**

M.A Psychology Part II

c/o SNTD Women's University Hostel, Churchgate, Mumbai-400020

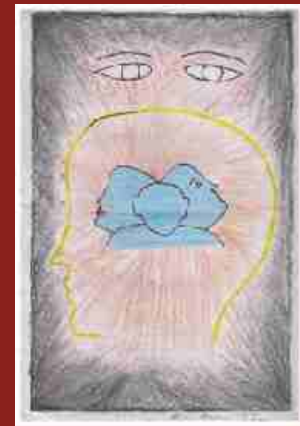
## ENTRIES TO THE COVER PAGE COMPETITION



Varshini



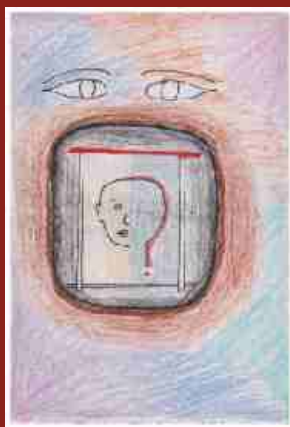
Afreen Rizba



Kiran Kumar



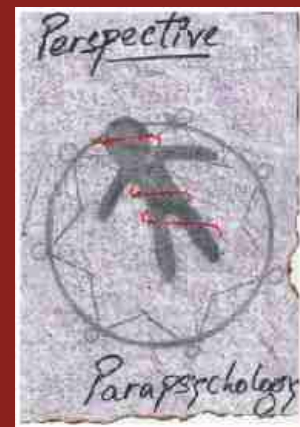
Ann Mary Malayil



Kiran Kumar



Vidhu Vincent



Pashmi Trivedi

## In the next issue...

In this issue of **Perspective**, we have strived to portray various points of view on the sub-disciplines of Parapsychology. Some authors have criticized the discipline while others hold it to be an authentic field which deserves to be discussed and not discarded prematurely. We hope that the articles have been faithful to our vision in depicting the key elements of Parapsychology in the context of the alternate perspectives and controversies that surround them.

In **Perspective's** next issue, we would like to address issues related to the changing trends in family structure and the ensuing challenges to practise. Each individual belongs to a system and changes in that system will necessarily influence the individual. This, therefore becomes an important area of discussion among practicing mental health professionals that requires extensive exploration.

**Perspective** has seen constant growth since the time of its inception. We will endeavor to take it forward and invite your feedback and opinions to further our vision.

**For your suggestions and comments write to:**

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# Perspective



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