

What is Parapsychology?

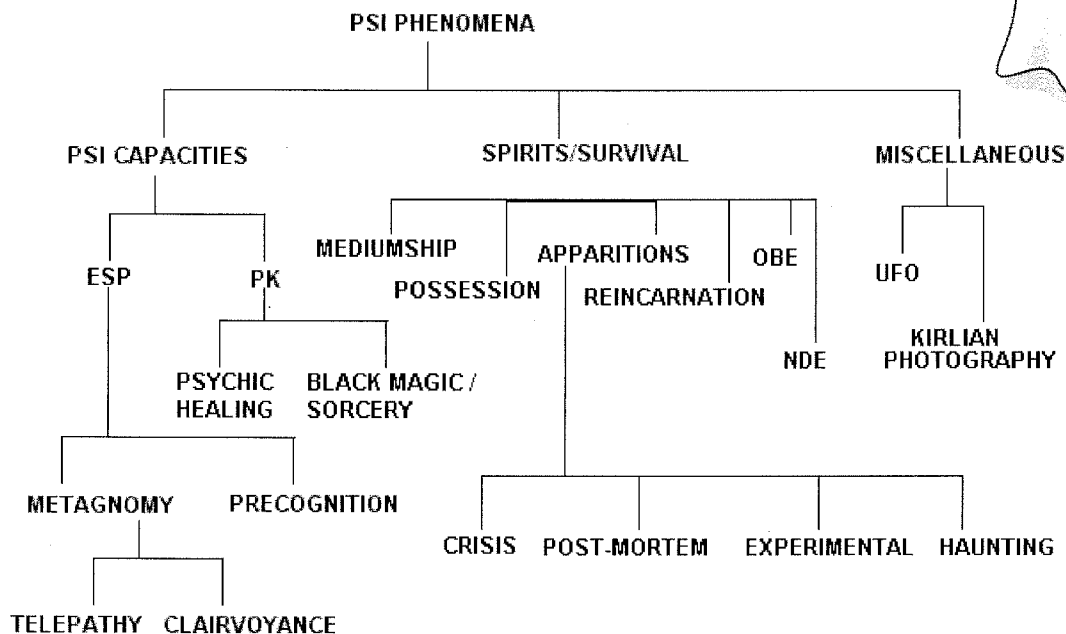
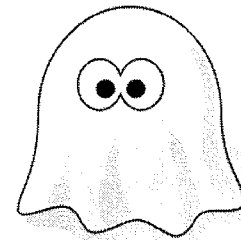
A Historical Perspective

Parapsychology is the branch of Psychology which studies behavior transcending known modes of sensory cognition and motor activity. Scientific study of the so called supernatural phenomena can be said to have commenced from 1882 with the founding of the society for Psychical Research in London. Similar societies now exist in many countries. The term parapsychology has been popularized by Dr.J.B.Rhine of the Duke University in U.S.A. The Parapsychology Laboratory was established at Duke University in 1934. There, psi phenomena were studied by means of laboratory experiments under controlled conditions. Many people therefore relate the term parapsychology mainly to this type of investigation.

Since the phenomena under study are rare and often contrary to common sense and the known laws of nature, most scientists remain skeptical as to the authenticity of the phenomena. Personal prejudices and beliefs of the investigator can have greater effect on the study than in other sciences. The possibility of the investigator being fooled by clever charlatans and of biased observation and reporting make people hesitate to consider evidence from studies as conclusive. All sorts of criticisms are made on the study, sometimes even going to the extent of questioning the personal integrity and honesty of the research worker.

The number of psychologists believing that the existence of genuine parapsychological phenomena has been demonstrated scientifically has increased considerably in recent times. Still, some even now try to explain away the reported occurrences in terms of known psychological concepts like suggestion, hysteria, hallucination, etc. or in terms of fraud, trickery, etc. Some accept the genuineness of psi capacities like extrasensory perception (ESP) and psychokinesis (PK), but do not consider the evidence for survival or for life beyond death or for the existence of spirits adequate. There are scientists on the other extreme who believe that enough evidence has been gathered to prove the existence of spirits and think that it is possible to communicate with the spirits of dead individuals.

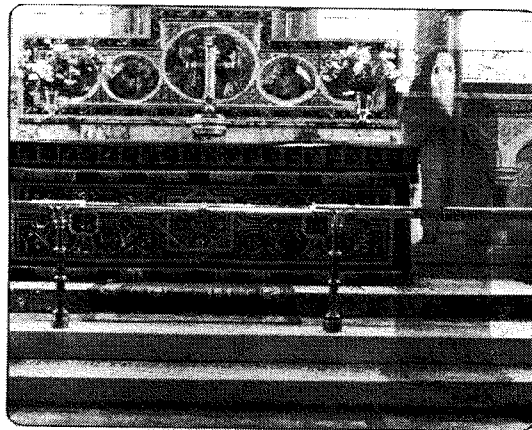
Classification of Psi Phenomena



Parapsychology & Social Psychology

There is MUCH debate over the credibility of parapsychology and its 'research' but we can use Social Psychology to explain many of these claims. Do people conform and obey when others set a precedent? Are we influenced by other people? YES!!

Example: Look at the pictures below. Do you see a 'ghost'? 😊



Parapsychology & Halloween Fun 😊

For Halloween, let's see if you can use principles from Chapter 18 (Social Psych) and try to influence, and conform your friends into believing they have had a 'paranormal' experience. Please see assignment. 😊

Social Psychology: Bonus Halloween Activity

'Parapsychology & Group Influence'



Have you ever felt someone was 'watching you'? Have the hairs on your neck or arms stood up for no reason? Have you actually ever seen a 'ghost'? ☺ Well thousands of people around the world either currently believe in or have claimed to have seen an apparent 'ghost'. Then there are others who are skeptics and argue against the belief. In Psychology, there is actually a term for this:

Parapsychology is the study of ostensibly paranormal psychological phenomena. Phenomena studied include extra-sensory perception, psychokinesis, and survival of consciousness after death; parapsychologists call these phenomena *psi*, a neutral term non-suggestive of what causes the phenomena or experiences.

The interesting thing about 'haunted' places, is that once someone has claimed to have seen something, more and more people come forward and admit they too have seen something. So do they actually see 'ghosts' or is it merely a social phenomenon? Does someone admitting to seeing it cause an acceptance amongst others? Does it influence their actions? (hint: Ch 18 ☺)

In Burnaby and Vancouver, some of the 'most haunted' places include:

- The present location of the **Burnaby Art Gallery** was the mansion Fairacres built by a tycoon Henry Ceperley in 1909. There are sightings of a woman dressed in an old fashioned white gown who strolls the halls and walks through walls. There is also the figure of a man in old fashioned clothing who stands at the top of the main staircase. These two ghosts are believed to be Henry and Grace Ceperley. Pictures appear to move off the walls and children's faces can be seen looking out of the third floor windows.

- Shadbolt Centre for the Performing Arts, which is next door to the Burnaby Art Gallery, there was a girl actress who drowned in the nearby lake. It is believed that her ghost rearranges furniture and props. Doors seem to open for no apparent reason. One time, there was a girl dancing on stage and the lights went out when a song about spirits was performed. Once the song stopped, the power went on again. This same performer saw the ghost of the girl actress in the back room of the theatre.
- In the same area of Burnaby, a grandfather clock at the Hart House restaurant seems to chime at very odd times.
- In Burnaby's Central Park, ghosts have been seen around the lake, forest and stadium. Apparently a ghost is seen walking in the forest. People have reported seeing an apparition of little boy playing around the lake in the evening. He then disappears. In the stadium, a woman calling out in an undistinguishable language can be heard. It is believed this woman lost her kids in the park in the 1930s.
- Apparitions that look like nuns can be seen at Gilmore School during the nighttime.
- A phantom jogger seems to disappear and reappear in Confederation Park.
- The ghost of a little boy is sometimes seen running around the gravestones at the Masonic Cemetery
- Orpheum Theatre
- Hotel Vancouver
- Dominion Building in Gastown
- UBC Main Library
- Old Spaghetti Factory in New West



Halloween Social Psychology

Why is it, that one person can cause a mini-phenomenon? Do you think people come forward only after someone else does first? Why do you think this is? Explain how this 'domino effect in thinking' might happen from a psychological point of view.

For this assignment, you must not go out alone. You must follow these rules before you begin the assignment:

- Be in groups of 3-5 people
- Be safe: use common sense
- Do not enter properties if closed, after hours, or private land
- Be sure to tell your parents where you are going and when you will be home



Assignment:

You must go to one of the 'haunted' locations with your group of friends.

DO NOT tell your friends why you are doing this. Your task is to convince them that you/they *HAVE* seen a 'ghost' at the supposedly haunted location. When you have convinced them and they all have agreed that they have 'seen or felt' something, you must answer the following questions below to hand in:

- Explain how you convinced (or attempted) to convince your friends there was something paranormal
- Describe how social facilitation, social loafing, deindividuation, conformity, and group think all worked in this situation
- Explain how conformity and obedience studies such as this one can help us to understand our susceptibility to social influence.
- Did you at anytime actually start to believe yourself and your friends reactions? ☺ Explain.

CRITERIA:

- answer all four questions asked in detail with support/facts
- overall effort, detail, and explanations
- general understanding of terms required

Total Marks:

50 Marks

