

Christine Simmonds-Moore, PhD

Abstract

How do the *Synesthesias* relate to Anomalous Experiences?

Synesthesia refers to the perceptual experience of two senses being experienced *together*, i.e., there is an additional perceptual response alongside the usual response to a sensory or conceptual stimulus (people taste shapes, hear colors, experience time spatially, etc.).

At least some anomalous experiences are associated with synesthesia (OBEs and auras in particular). In this presentation, Dr. Simmonds-Moore will present the idea that synesthesia (or the *synesthesias*) may underpin a wider variety of anomalies, including experiences of psi. An ongoing two-part research project will be described which will explore this relationship.

In an online survey investigation, a synesthesia questionnaire will be developed from existing questionnaires to measure the full range of these types of experience. Respondents will also be asked to complete the Synesthesia subscale of the Tellegen Absorption questionnaire, questionnaires about their anomalous experiences (including ESP experiences) and personality (with a particular focus on the personality construct of schizotypy). This will allow for a systematic evaluation of the incidence of the synesthesias and the relationship between synesthesia and anomaly-proneness in the general population.

In the second part of the investigation, a laboratory based experiment will be undertaken to investigate the idea that those who are *strong* synesthetes may perform better at a laboratory based ESP task and that they may have better episodic and other memory ability than other people, which may underpin ESP ability. This study will compare performance on a *mental time travel* task and on a version of Bem's *precognitive memory* task to compare performance between synesthetes and a group of matched controls.

Abstract

The Psychology of Psi Experiences

In this talk, Dr. Simmonds-Moore will describe a course for Atlantic University in which psi experiences will be explored from a variety of levels (biological, cognitive-perceptual, personality, social) and perspectives (mainstream and psi explanations). Students will

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be asked to engage in exercises, readings and engage in discussions about the topics covered. The course will include discussion of the *nature and definition of psi experiences* (including the differences between Parapsychology and studying “The Paranormal”, subjective paranormal experiences, anomalous experiences and transpersonal experiences, the incidence and prevalence of experiences, and the psychology of belief and disbelief). Students will also explore the *phenomenology of psi experiences*, including the early work of Louisa Rhine and more recent research which has attempted to explore a range of experiences (and their after effects) from a phenomenological or qualitative perspective. Several topics will also be included on *what looks like psi but isn't* (including mediumship, cold reading and Barnum statements, an exploration of how apothenia and pareidolia may explain some experiences and the role of expectation, suggestion and belief on psychic experiences). Topics relating to how *altered states of consciousness* relate to psi experiences will also be covered (including dreams, other sleep states including hypnagogia and sleep paralysis and one exploring meditation). In addition, the course will explore how *personality* relates to psi experiences (including discussion of boundary thinness, transliminality and related variables, including the schizotypy construct, dissociation, hypnosis proneness and related variables, creativity and synesthesia). This course will also include discussion of the differences between healthy and less healthy experiences and the possible (biological, evolutionary, spiritual) reasons for some people being more prone to psi experiences and beliefs than others.



Christine Simmonds-Moore recently moved to the USA from her native UK, where she worked for 10 years as a professor of psychology at Liverpool Hope University. Christine has an undergraduate degree in psychology, a masters degree in Cognitive Science, a Postgraduate Diploma in Consciousness and Transpersonal Psychology and a PhD on the psychology of anomalous experiences.

She has regularly taught courses on the psychology of anomalous experiences and parapsychology and mainstream psychology. She currently holds a faculty position at Atlantic University. Dr. Simmonds-Moore also works at the Rhine Research Center as a senior Research Fellow, holds a visiting faculty position at the University of Virginia and will take up a new position with the psychology department with the University of West Georgia in the fall.

Christine is an active researcher, and has focused on further understanding individual differences and anomalous experiences, with a particular focus on personality types related to boundary thinness. Current research projects include one on subjective experiences of Psychokinesis, and a project on the relationship between Synesthesia and anomalous experiences.

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