

Extrasensory perception, "science and the paranormal" essay sample

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An ad for the infamous psychic, Miss. Cleo, plays across my television screen. She claims she can read my mind, predict my future, and give me advice on how to live my life. And, best of all, the first five minutes of my reading are free! My logical self tells me that Miss. Cleo is nothing but a scam for money; I mean come on, no one can read a person's mind – especially over the telephone! Then again, my curiosity sets in and I wonder, “ Well, it's free, what's the harm in trying? What if Miss. Cleo really is a psychic?” But like usual, my logic wins and I'm left to wonder about Miss. Cleo and her “ abilities”.

Amid the recent news of lawsuits against Miss. Cleo, one in particular filled by the Federal Trade Commission, America finds out that yes, Miss. Cleo is a fraud. She scams customer's money by keeping them on hold for the first five minutes, and then charges ridiculous amounts of money for each minute thereafter. Her predictions are said to be vague and applicable to almost anyone, and while I'm sure Miss. Cleo can give a person advice about their life, it's not exactly the advice one might be in search of. In fact, extrasensory perception (ESP), as defined by Dennis Coon's Essentials of Psychology, is the “ purported ability to perceive events in ways that cannot be explained by known sensory capacities”, an issue that consistently baffles parapsychologists.

Studies have been concluded in an attempt to decipher the truth behind extrasensory perception and all that goes along with it: clairvoyance (the

ability to perceive events or know information without being present at the site of origin), telepathy (the ability to read someone else's mind), precognition (the ability to predict future events) and psychokinesis (the ability to influence other inanimate objects by willpower). For example, J. B. Rhine conducted a study using ESP cards, which each had one of five symbols on the backside. The subject was to guess the symbol on the back of the card without looking. However, due to the poor quality of the cards, Rhine's experiment was not scientific, – some of the participants could see the symbol through the back of the card.

Similar studies have been done to further the research of extrasensory perception. Surprisingly enough though, the results have varied.

Parapsychologists have found such variation in results that it's difficult to tell whether or not extrasensory perception is real. For example, a person may indicate having extrasensory perception the first time being examined, but, for some unknown reason, that same person produces contrasting results on the exam a second time. These results allude to two conclusions:

extrasensory perception is not real, rather just a “ run of luck”, or, extrasensory perception is a real occurrence, only short-lived. However, it is proven that some of the most spectacular findings in parapsychology cannot and have not been reproduced. This fact also goes to prove that extrasensory perception might simply be a heightened sense of intuition.

For now, we'll never know whether or not Miss. Cleo is able to tell us intimate details of our lives over the telephone. Who knows, maybe psychics have some sort of pact not to reveal the validity of their abilities. But, until science

proves extrasensory perception is one hundred percent feasible and accurate, Miss. Cleo won't be getting any of my money.

References

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