

Wynter Stone's Quick Guide to Mystical Experiences

Welcome to Wynter Stone's Quick Guide, a mini-encyclopedia of terminology relating to mystical and paranormal experiences.

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Divination and Fortune Telling

Divination is the art of foretelling the future or uncovering hidden information. It may involve the interpretation of natural signs (such as cloud patterns or the organs of sacrificed animals), the interpretation of artificial signs (such as cards, dice, etc.), or communication with spirits, either directly or indirectly (such as in dream interpretation).

In ancient times divination was often a religious function, and was frequently used to decide affairs of state.

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Astrology

In ancient times, people observed the influence of the heavenly bodies on the world around them, and came to believe that the stars and planets must also have a strong influence on human character and destiny. In cultures where science, religion, and philosophy were not viewed as separate disciplines, astrologers studied the movements of the sun and the moon to determine their effect on agriculture, and also to perform divinatory functions.

Today, astronomy is the scientific study of celestial bodies, completely separate from astrology, the philosophy which attempts to explore what effects, if any, the aspects of the heavenly bodies may have on individual lives.

The Zodiac is the apparent path of the Sun through the heavens, and for purposes of astrology contains twelve constellations, or "signs". The most important aspect in determining personality is the "sun sign", or the zone of the Zodiac in which the Sun resided on the person's birth date.

Another name for astrology is astromancy.

Cartomancy

The origin of Tarot cards is unknown. They have been used for hundreds of years. Many scholars believe they originated in Egypt, and symbols of Egyptian mythology appear in many Tarot designs. The philosophies expressed in the lore and literature surrounding the Tarot appear in many different cultures, incorporating material from astrology, numerology, and religion. Carl Jung and other psychoanalysts have seen archetypal symbols of the unconscious in the Tarot, and many practitioners use them as a stimulus for meditation, contemplation, and exploration of the inner mind. However, their most common use has always been for divination.

The Tarot deck consists of 78 cards. Fifty-six of these are divided into four suits: Cups, Wands, Swords and Pentacles. Each suit has fourteen cards: Ace through Ten, Page, Knight, Queen and King. This group of 56 is known as the Minor Arcana, and is the ancestor of our modern playing cards (The Page was dropped and the Knight became the Jack). The remaining 22 cards are known as the Major Arcana. They are numbered from 0 to 21, and each embodies an important symbol of nature, mysticism, or humanity.

There are many different "traditional" methods of Tarot card reading, but probably the most well-known today is the ten-card layout known as the Celtic Cross.

Modern playing cards evolved from the Tarot, and are also used for fortune telling.

Usually, the entire 52-card deck is used, but some readers like to discard the twos through sixes and use a 32-card deck. Each suit has its own influence, and may be seen to correspond with a suit from the Tarot. Hearts have a meaning similar to cups, clubs to wands, diamonds to pentacles, and spades to swords. The face cards represent people in the querent's life.

Sometimes special decks, such as decks based on runestones or hieroglyphics, are used.

Dice, Stones, Bones

Dice have been used for both games and divination for thousands of years. Fortune telling with dice probably originated with the use of bones, and is closely related to both geomancy and the casting of runestones.

Two or three dice are tossed into a circle. If a die falls outside the circle, it is not counted, and may be a sign of bad luck. Generally dice are used for very simple matters, questions which require a yes-or-no approach, or straightforward decision about an immediate course of action.

Dominoes are related to dice and are also used in fortune telling. The tiles are shuffled face down, and two or three are selected at random.

Dowsing

Dowsing describes the activity of using a forked stick, pendulum, or bent rod to locate hidden objects or people, especially underground materials such as water or oil.

"Medical" dowsing uses a pendulum suspended over the patient's body to diagnose ills.

Feng Shui

Feng shui is a Chinese art based on the concept that people must be in harmony with the earth in order to prosper. Buildings and other constructions are analyzed for their placement within the natural landscape and other factors of alignment and environment.

Geomancy

Geomancy is an ancient form of divination originating in Africa. "Geo" means "earth", and geomancy originally used materials taken from the earth -- sand and pebbles. Seeds, nuts, and other natural materials were also used. The geomancer would cast the material in a circle on the ground and use the resulting pattern for divination.

During the Middle Ages, geomancy was developed into a complex art in Europe, and was frequently described in the writings of Cornelius Agrippa. Different methods of obtaining patterns were used, and led to the use of dots drawn randomly on paper. Although outlawed because of associations with black magic, geomantic consultations were sought by influential members of society. Later practitioners calculated the relationships between geomantic patterns and the Zodiac and developed the modern Astro-Geomantic reading.

The term "Geomancy" is sometimes incorrectly used to refer to the Chinese art of Feng Shui which is actually a completely separate practice.

I Ching

The I Ching ("Book of Changes") is an ancient Chinese book originating in antiquity. It is a book of divinations and commentaries used for both fortune telling and philosophical insight.

The petitioner uses randomly selected yarrow stalks or tosses coins to generate a pattern of numbers which become either broken or unbroken lines. The six lines used in the consultation are known as the hexagram. There are sixty four hexagrams, each with corresponding text which provides guidance couched in poetic language.

The I Ching embodies the "Yin and Yang" philosophy, which is believed to provide balance throughout nature.

There are many translations and interpretations of the I Ching. The one most familiar in Western culture is the Wilhelm/Baynes translation.

Nostradamus

Nostradamus (Michel de Nostre-Dame, 1503-1566) was a French astrologer and physician whose controversial book of rhymed prophecies, "Centuries", was condemned by the Pope in 1781. The often ambiguous language of the prophecies has left them open to a wide variety of interpretations, including "The Oracles of Nostradamus" by Chas. A. Ward.

Numerology

Numerology, as a philosophy, originated with Pythagoras, a philosopher and mathematician of ancient Greece. According to numerologists, numbers have special meanings, and the mathematical relationships of letters and numbers can be analyzed in order to understand the significance of names and their spiritual vibrations.

Each letter of the alphabet corresponds to a number. To find the meaning of a name, its numbers are added together. If the total has more than two digits, the individual digits are added together, and so on, until the number is reduced to a single digit. This same method is applied to dates.

Certain two-digit numbers are given special significance, and are called the Master Numbers. These are the "double digit" numbers 11, 22, 33, etc.

Different combinations of numbers in a person's name, such as the total derived from all the vowels or all the consonants, are used to determine different aspects of personality and destiny. Complex analyses of names and dates are used to predict events and challenges throughout a person's lifetime.

Oracles

An oracle is a method of prophecy in which spirits or deities send messages, usually through a human being (medium) who enters a trance, sometimes speaking with the voice of the spirit, in other cases emitting words or sounds which require translation into verse. In ancient Greece and Rome, oracles were consulted on matters of military and social importance.

The mediums were usually middle-aged priestesses who lived in caves or temples, the most famous being the oracle at Delphi. Their trances may have been induced by fasting, herbs, drugs, smoke, or special vapors emitted from cracks in the rocks. Some ancient oracles spoke through trees or statues, or sent prophetic dreams to the priests and priestesses.

Palmistry

Palmistry is a system by which the characteristics of the hand, particularly the lines found in the palm, are analyzed as a means of determining personality and predicting life events.

At the simplest level, palmists look to three major lines which appear in a normal palm, known as the Life Line, the Heart Line and the Head Line. For a more complete reading, other lines are examined, including rare lines which may not be present in all hands. A complete reading will also include analysis of the "mounts", various raised or fleshy areas of the palm.

The size, shape and color of the fingernails, relative length of the fingers, angle and shape of the fingers, appearance of the joints, relative size of the palm's quadrants, creases at the wrist, style of fingerprints and overall hand shape are all considered in a complete palmistry session.

Although sometimes associated with Gypsy fortune tellers, palmistry has been practiced in many different cultures.

Runes

Runes are the characters of the earliest known alphabet among the ancient nomadic tribes of Scandinavia and Northern Europe. Although used as letters, they also had symbolic meanings for use in magic. They have been found carved on rocks in many different countries, and were also carved or painted on small stones or pieces of wood.

An ancient practitioner who wished to "cast" a spell on someone would actually throw carved runes at the person. For purposes of divination, the runes would be thrown or randomly laid in a circle drawn on the ground.

Today, there are different runic systems in use, employing between 16 and 33 runes. Modern runic systems find relationships between runes, numerology, astrology, and geomancy.

Scrying

Scrying is a method of divination which relies on the practitioner's ability to interpret images. It is probably most familiar in the form of crystal-gazing or tea-leaf reading.

In tea-leaf reading, the querent drinks a cup of freshly brewed tea, allowing the leaves to settle on the bottom of the cup. The reader then examines the pattern formed by the leaves and attempts to intuitively interpret their meaning. Coffee grounds can be used in the same way, as can clear water with a few drops of ink poured in and allowed to swirl. Tea leaf reading is also known as tasseography.

For crystal gazing, a room dimly lit with candles is preferred, as it allows images and shadows to flicker inside the crystal. Almost any reflective surface can be used for scrying. The ancient Greeks sometimes used a polished mirror suspended in water.

Querent

In fortune-telling, the Querent is the person seeking answers.

Divination

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Religion, Philosophy, Magic

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Amulets and Talismans

An amulet, or talisman, is an object believed to possess magical powers which will protect its possessor against harm or bad luck.

Talismans may be used to attract good luck, success, love., etc., to convey attributes such as invisibility or super strength, or to perform actions, such as healing.

Ecstasy

Religious ecstasy is a joyous, trancelike state in which a person loses the sense of self and experiences a feeling of oneness with God and the universe. It may be induced by conditions such as intense meditation, death or near-death, and is believed to be a prelude to the ultimate, eternal experience of God's presence.

Holy Grail

A grail is a cup or vessel, and in ancient pagan legends it was a cup of plenty, symbolizing the female power of the Goddess and motherhood in constantly regenerating life. In its Christianized form, the Grail was the cup used by Christ at the Last Supper, representing spiritual regeneration, and appeared as the object of Arthurian quests.

Halo

The halo is a circle, oval or disk of light portrayed above or around the heads of dieties, saints, martyrs, or extremely wise or virtuous people. It symbolizes holiness, intellectual energy, or supernatural power. When the halo surrounds the entire body, it is called the aureole. See [Auras](#).

Karma and Reincarnation

Reincarnation is the after-death return of the soul to another physical life.

In Hinduism and Buddhism, karma consists of the thoughts and actions taken in life which will determine the circumstances of subsequent reincarnations.

Metaphysics

Metaphysics is the branch of philosophy which systematically investigates the nature of ultimate reality. It includes the study of the foundations and limits of human knowledge.

Mythology

Every culture has stories and legends which attempt to explain the origin of the world, the reasons for natural laws and human behavior, and the history of gods and heroic figures. Mythology is often part of a religious tradition, but encompasses the larger social structure and is used as a means of teaching wisdom, maintaining links between past and present, and providing individuals with a sense of their own role within the universe.

Mysticism

There are many different types of mysticism, and it is found in nearly every religion. In general, it is a belief in the possibility of comprehending universal truth through direct contact with the mind of God.

Superstition

Superstition generally refers to a belief that there is a cause-and-effect relationship between unrelated events.

For example, a baseball player who was wearing pink socks during a winning game may feel that the socks are "lucky" and that he must wear them to help his team win. An object worn for good luck is known as a talisman.

Some superstitions have become part of the folklore of certain cultures and are followed by many people within that culture. Examples in western culture are the ideas that breaking a mirror or walking under a ladder causes bad luck, or that finding a four-leaf clover will bring good luck.

Many people believe that the number thirteen is unlucky. This belief is so widespread that the managers of many tall buildings skip from eleven to twelve when numbering the floors. Many people consider Friday the 13th particularly unlucky and will not venture outside on this date. A morbid fear of the number thirteen is called triskaidekaphobia.

Although some associate this superstition with the thirteen people seated at the Last Supper, the number's bad reputation dates back much further, and its origins are unknown.

Voodoo

Voodoo, also called Vodoun, is a religion created by the imposition of Catholicism on ancient African rites, originally developed by slaves in the Caribbean. Voodoo worship includes many gods, deities, and spirits, with emphasis on the Great Serpent. Voodoo practice involves drumming, dancing, chanting, trances and animal sacrifice. Some voodoo worshipers also practice sorcery and black magic.

Witchcraft

Witchcraft is a system of magic and sorcery using rituals and formulas to cast spells and practice divination. Witches are believed to possess supernatural powers, and are often perceived as being evil or having connections with the Devil and evil spirits, although some cultures differentiate between "white" and "black" (good and bad) witchcraft.

As a modern religion, witchcraft is often called Wicca and has much in common with Neo-Paganism.

Zen

Zen is a Buddhist sect developed in China and Japan in which meditation is one of the the keys to achieving enlightenment. There are different kinds of meditation, but the most important is "zazen", or sitting meditation. Zen students also contemplate the "koan", illogical questions which cannot be answered through intellect. "Satori", the breakthrough of consciousness to a new, timeless awareness, may come after a period of meditation, or at any unexpected time after years of Zen practice.

Meditation

Meditation is a technique or discipline practiced in an attempt to enter an altered state of consciousness, often as a means of achieving mental or spiritual growth.

There are many different techniques of mediation, which may include special forms of exercise, concentration, or chanting.

Mantra

A mantra is a sacred name or syllable used in chanting and meditation.

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Avatar

"Avatar" is a Sanskrit word which means "Descent" and is used in Hinduism to refer to a human incarnation of the Divine.

Exorcism

Exorcism is the act of expelling a supernatural being from a place where it is not wanted.

Glossolalia

Glossolalia is the act of speaking in an unknown language, usually associated with religious ecstasy, often referred to as "speaking in tongues".

Miracles

A miracle is an event, perceptible to the senses, which transcends the normal course of nature, and occurs in a religious context.

Stigmata

The spontaneous appearance of bleeding, blisters, or wounds on the skin in locations replicating those of the wounds of Christ on the cross. These generally occur in highly religious individuals and are usually associated with intensely focused meditation and/or personal stress.

Paranormal and Unusual Experiences

Pick A Topic

Astral Projection

Automatic Writing

Dreams

Deja vu

Extrasensory Perception

Intuition

Near-Death Experience

Poltergeist

Seances and Channeling

Astral Projection

Also referred to as an out-of-body experience, this is a phenomenon in which a person's spirit seems to leave the body and travel to other locations. The experience is often associated with altered states of consciousness or near-death experiences.

Poltergeist

A poltergeist is supposedly a mischievous spirit which plays tricks or causes damage by moving inanimate objects. It is sometimes believed to be a phenomenon of telekinesis associated with troubled individuals, especially children.

Automatic Writing

Automatic writing is writing performed while in an altered state of consciousness. The writer may not be aware of the material written, and may not remember the act of writing. Automatic writing may occur as a form of channelling.

Dreams

Dreams are the thoughts, feelings and images experienced during sleep, usually associated with certain types of brain activity and physical manifestations. Many people are unable to remember their dreams, while most others remember only some dreams. Dreams most likely to be remembered are those occurring just prior to waking.

Since ancient times, dream interpretation has been used as a method of divination. Modern dream interpretation is used as a tool for psychoanalysis. "Lucid" dreaming, in which the dreamer consciously directs the content of the dream, is sometimes used therapeutically, or as a method of attempting astral projection.

A lucid dream is one in which the dreamer is aware that he or she is dreaming. In some cases it is possible to take control of the dream and influence its outcome. Some people are able to develop a skill for lucid dreaming through practice, and some believe it can be used to enhance creativity and problem-solving, or as a therapeutic tool.

Deja Vu

"Deja vu", a French phrase meaning "already seen" is used to describe the common phenomenon of feeling that a new experience has actually happened before. Although some people believe this may be an indication of past-life memories or clairvoyance, most psychologists believe it is caused by "double cerebration", in which one part of the brain lags slightly behind the other in processing information, thus creating an instant memory.

Extrasensory Perception

Extra-sensory perception (ESP), sometimes referred to as Psi, is the apparent ability to obtain sensory information through means other than the five senses. The term is sometimes used to describe any sort of paranormal ability.

"Clairvoyance" is the ability to know something which cannot be detected through the five senses. It may include any of the following:

"Precognition" is the ability to know what will happen in the future.

"Telepathy" is the ability to know something that is in another person's mind, even if that person is too far away to be sensed in any other way.

"Retrocognition" is the ability to know something that happened in the past when there is no normal way to have known about it.

"Telekinesis" or psychokinesis (sometimes abbreviated as PK) is the ability to move or change physical objects using only the mind.

Intuition

Intuition is often described as a "gut feeling" or "hunch". It is knowledge obtained without a logical explanation. Intuitive people often seem to make unconscious use of good observational skills and experience to reach conclusions which they are unable to explain clearly. People who are consistently and successfully intuitive are often thought to have extra-sensory perception.

Psi

Psi is a term used to refer to extrasensory perception (ESP) and telekinesis.

Near-Death Experience

"Near-Death Experience" refers to the remembered experiences of people who appear to die and then return to life, or who have come extremely close to death. Many of these reported experiences share common elements, such as the sensation of floating out of and above the body, moving through a dark tunnel toward a bright light, meeting dead friends and relatives or religious figures, meeting a spiritual guide or deity, and feeling great happiness and peacefulness. People who have such experiences often report losing their fear of death, experiencing a new or increased sense of religious belief and spirituality, and discovering a new sense of purpose in life.

Seances and Channeling

Some people believe they are able to contact the spirits of the dead, or beings from distant times and places or other planes of existence.

Traditionally, the person in contact with the spirit is known as a medium, and an event organized for the purpose of contacting spirits is known as a seance.

The medium may simply hear the spirit, or may induce the spirit to produce signs, such as moving objects or making sounds, to indicate its presence. In some cases the spirit may appear to temporarily possess the medium's body and use it to speak in its own voice or to produce written communications.

Such experiences are often referred to as "channeling", and the medium may be called a channel.

Personalities - Places - Symbols - Ideas

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Age of Aquarius

The Age of Aquarius is a predicted 2000-year era of worldwide change, enlightenment, intellectual achievement, love, peace and spirituality. Due to different methods of calculation used by different astrologers, its beginning is considered to be anywhere between 1904 and 2160. Some have suggested that the beginning of the Age of Aquarius overlaps the ending of the preceding Age of Pisces, and cannot be clearly determined.

The Age of Aquarius concept was very popular during the social upheaval of the 1960's. It is sometimes considered synonymous with the term New Age.

Auras

Many people believe that human beings emit an energy field which can be perceived in the form of a colored aura surrounding the body. Some people apparently see these auras spontaneously, or by using special methods of concentration. The size, color, and intensity of the aura are seen as indicators of a person's character, health, and emotional condition. The aura may also indicate energy points known as Chakra points.

See Halo

Chakra Points

In yoga, a chakra is a spot or vortice penetrating or residing within the body's energy field. The condition of the chakras is believe to affect the physical and emotional health of the individual. Although not accepted scientifically, they are often taken into account during the practice of alternative healing systems.

Body Work

Bodywork is therapy which involves manipulating or touching the body in order to improve emotional or physical health, stimulate self-healing, or promote spiritual growth. Many different kinds of massage, touch, and movement fall under this umbrella, including Rolfing, Shiatsu, Feldenkrais, Reflexology and Accupressure.

Graphology

Graphology is the analysis of handwriting. Long accepted as a means of identifying an individual's handwriting in order to determine identity or detect forgery, graphology is also frequently used as a means of analyzing personality.

Many psychologists now agree that the condition of a person's handwriting can be an indicator of emotional states, and may be used to diagnose certain types of physical, mental and emotional disturbances. However, not all agree that it can actually reveal details about the personality.

Graphologists examine the size, shape and position of individual letters, the slant of the lines on the page, and the amount of pressure used by the writer. They look for the characteristics of loops, spaces, and capital letters. The signature is usually analyzed separately, as a sign of the image the person wishes to project to the world. Even the color of the ink may be taken into consideration.

In order to make a complete handwriting analysis, the graphologist needs a sample at least a page long, written on unlined paper, and signed.

New Age

The term "New Age" is used to refer to a wide range of interests and beliefs encompassing religion, philosophy, health care, psychology, and occult practices, often with particular focus on those which depart from established Euro-American standards.

The New Age is often perceived as a social movement, and there are many organizations and networks of individuals which fall under its broad umbrella. However, there is no one unifying principle or agenda that clearly defines New Age. It is whatever one believes it to be.

Reflexology

Reflexology is a therapeutic technique in which pressure is applied to surfaces on the feet which are believed to correspond to various organs of the body.

Phrenology

Phrenology was developed in 1796 by Dr. Franz Joseph Gall of Vienna. He believed that mental abilities could be discovered by analyzing the shape of the head and the various bumps and depressions found on the skull.

Phrenology reached its peak of popularity in the mid-nineteenth century, but has since been discredited and is now rarely practiced.

Shaman

A shaman is a healer who uses magical powers or the assistance of guiding spirits. Shamans generally perform healing while in a trancelike state which can be entered at will, although some simply use intense concentration and intuition. They may also use rituals, talismans, magic potions, and herbs.

The shaman has the power to enter other states of reality or other worlds and to communicate with spirits and souls. In some cultures the shaman can take on the shape of animals, control the elements, and make prophecies.

Yin-Yang

This Chinese symbol is a circle divided into two equal parts, one dark and one light, which curve to fit each other. There is a spot of dark in the light and a spot of light in the dark. The light half represents "Yang", the active, masculine principle, and the dark half represents "Yin", the passive, feminine principle. These dual forces are both opposed and interdependent, each containing aspects of other other, both required for proper balance in the universe.

Alchemy

Alchemy was the ancestor of modern chemistry, metallurgy, and other sciences. In the Middle Ages, alchemists attempted to find formulas which would enable them to transform common metals into gold and silver.

Sedona

This town in central Arizona is near an area sacred to Native Americans. It has become attractive to thousands of New Age tourists because it supposedly lies in an area of psychic power, and many mystical experiences have been reported to occur there.

Unicorn

The unicorn is a mythical animal usually portrayed as an elusive white horse with a single horn protruding from its forehead. It represents both virility and chastity; according to some legends, it can be captured and subdued by the mere presence of a virgin.

Miscellaneous

Pick A Topic

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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Wynter Stone's Quick Guide For Windows
Author: Rosemary K. West Registration: \$0.00

An on-disk mini-encyclopedia of subjects related to mystical experiences of various kinds, presented as a Windows Help file. Requires Windows 3.1. BBS filename: WGWIN15.*

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The files which are included as part of this software package:

VENDINFO.DIZ - VENDINFO standard data file containing vital information for disk vendors, distributors, BBBs, user groups, computer clubs, etc.

FILE_ID.DIZ - BBS description file

WGUIDE.HLP - Windows Help File (You're looking at it now!)

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