

Bumps in the Night!!!!

Paranormal “U”

Ghost Hunting: Hunting for the Paranormal or the Supernatural?

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Some believe paranormal and supernatural are one in the same. What are some of the first thoughts that pop into your head when you hear paranormal? Ghosts, spirits, entities, ghouls, vampires, werewolves, anything that can not be explained as 'normal', etc? Now let us talk about supernatural. What is the first thing that comes into mind? Aliens, UFO's, something godly, spirits, occult, etc? Perhaps as seekers of the unknown, we are seeking proof of both. Let's explore this further...

I would like to start with hard core definitions of both supernatural and paranormal. According to dictionary.reference.com it shows that paranormal is "beyond normal explanation". The same site shows that supernatural has many different definition possibilities ranging from its adjective form meaning "unexplainable by natural law or phenomena" and its noun form to mean "supernatural beings, behavior, and occurrences collectively".

I know that even as I write this, I will not be able to conclude if we are in search of the paranormal or the supernatural as these words take on a different meaning for each person. Definitions for both can be interpreted as similar. To me, the words can be interchangeable. To someone else, perhaps it is crystal clear to them that they are indeed different. If we were to categorize humans that still walk among us, what word would you use to describe them? Would it differ if it were a non-human entity?

Above all else we are hunting for answers. We find many that are explainable such as bangs or knocks that can come from the home settling or the pressure that builds in water pipes also known as 'water hammer'. We also find toxins that can cause symptoms that can be unexplained. Even with all that we know there are still experiences and events that are not so clear cut. I must refer back to one of the definitions for paranormal; 'beyond normal explanation'. Truth is, we don't know what the data is that has been caught, other than it doesn't have an explanation at this time.

Supernatural can also bring to mind the days of spiritualism at the turn of the century. With so much that known now as opposed to then, we are better informed to look for natural explanations for the things we once considered unexplainable. A hundred years ago, supernatural was anything from a disease that could not be cured to mental illnesses that had not been researched at all or enough at the time. For instance, if crops died it was because a religious deity had been angered. Everything and anything that could not be explained automatically was presumed to have an explanation outside of this realm of existence.

It could be that the language has changed. The two words mean the same in the sense of unexplained phenomenon; however, supernatural has been used more liberally. The paranormal, in its true definition, hesitates to put a name on unexplained data. The supernatural in its noun form does give names to entities and spirits. Perhaps if there is any difference at all it exists in that the supernatural presumes more than the paranormal does.

Sources:

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/supernatural>. Accessed August 15, 2011.

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/paranormal>. Accessed August 15, 2011.