



Харківський національний  
педагогічний університет  
імені Г.С. Сковороди

СУЧАСНІ ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ В ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯХ МОЛОДИХ НАУКОВЦІВ

## **МАТЕРІАЛИ**

міжвузівської науково-практичної конференції студентів

ХНПУ ім. Г. С. Сковороди

(16 травня 2017 р., м. Харків)

кафедра англійської мови

Харків 2017

## **WHY DO PEOPLE BELIEVE IN SUPERNATURAL EVIL FORCES?**

*Scientific adviser – Bezkorovaina O.L.*

Nowadays it has become a Halloween tradition to watch scary movies throughout the month of October. The tradition is well-known under the name of Shocktober in many American and European families. Inevitably, we end up viewing a number of films that involve evil spirits and demonic possessions. Like a lot of fans, we don't take these stories seriously. We just enjoy the fantasy. However, surveys suggest that many people, particularly those who describe themselves as highly religious, believe evil spirits are more than a fictional creation. But why? Do people gain any psychological benefits from believing that evil supernatural forces are real?

Scientists at the University of Florida have studied how religious beliefs contribute to perceptions of meaning in life [2]. Not surprisingly, researchers reliably find that religious beliefs help people find and maintain meaning. In general, the more religious people are, the more they believe their lives are meaningful. Religious beliefs make people feel like their existence is purposeful, that they are being watched over by benevolent supernatural agents (God, guardian angels), and that they are a part of a larger and meaningful cosmic drama. Not surprisingly then, when people are struggling with difficult life challenges that make them feel uncertain, stressed, or scared, religious beliefs serve an important psychological function. They restore and protect a sense of meaning in life.

Supernatural beliefs about evil forces and spirits may increase meaning because they support a broader worldview about the supernatural world[5]. That is, if there are forces of evil then there are probably forces of good. So people might be motivated to believe in evil supernatural agents and forces because they want to believe in benevolent supernatural agents and forces and the two go hand in hand. If this is true then one would expect that when people are struggling to find meaning in life they would be inclined to believe in the existence of evil forces, but only if they are the type of people who hold more positive supernatural beliefs such as the belief in a loving God.

Modern psychologists have recently explored and found support for this idea. In one study, administered questionnaires assessing religiosity and perceptions of meaning in life then presented research participants with a task that involved reading a profile of a young man who murdered his sister and responding to questions concerning the causes of his actions[1]. These questions specifically assessed the extent to which participants attributed his actions to non-supernatural causes (e.g., having an abusive father) or supernatural causes involving evil forces (e.g., having an evil spirit).

Highly religious participants who reported feeling like their lives lacked meaning were the most likely to believe that evil supernatural forces influenced the murderer's actions. In other words, it was the people who needed meaning (those

lacking it) and who derived meaning from supernatural beliefs. So, highly religious people were the most attracted to a supernatural explanation of a horrible crime. These individuals were more likely to believe that the murderer had a dark soul. They were less likely to attribute his actions to non-supernatural causes such as growing up in an abusive household[3].

Humans have long been fascinated by stories about magical forces for good and evil. These stories can be found in many of our religious traditions. Lots of the research has focused on the psychological benefits of the good side of supernatural beliefs. Beliefs about the power of prayer, positive energy, a loving God, and guardian angels give people comfort and a sense of security. The research suggests that there are benefits to the evil side as well. Beliefs about evil spirits and dark forces can be terrifying but they also reinforce broader beliefs about the existence of the supernatural. Good and evil forces are two sides of the same coin. Highly religious people invest in supernatural beliefs to affirm meaning when facing life experiences that threaten meaning. It is proved that these people don't only turn to more positive beliefs about benevolent forces when they are seeking meaning in life. Meaning can also be found in the less emotionally pleasant beliefs concerning the existence of forces for evil[4].

So, it seems that modern psychologists do know the answer to the question why people believe in scary stories, ghosts and all those monsters. Supernatural evil forces contribute to the very important feeling that our life is meaningful.

#### LITERATURE

1. Bakker, Gary M. 2013. *God: A Psychological Assessment*. –Boca Raton, FL: Universal-Publishers.
2. Oliver, J.E., and T.J. Wood. 2012. *Conspiracy theories, magical thinking, and the paranoid style(s) of mass opinion*. –University of Chicago Department of Political Science Working Paper Series.
3. Prep. Justin (Popovich). *Orthodox philosophy of truth: Articles*. –Perm, 2003.
4. James W. *Will to Faith*. – M.: The Republic, 1997.
5. Nesmelov V.I. *Faith and knowledge from the point of view of epistemology*. – Kazan: Central Printing House, 1913.

*Lytvyn Hanna, 35 Psy/Eng, KhNPU*

#### **LOVE LANGUAGES IN MODERN PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH**

*Scientific adviser – Bezkorovaina O.L.*

Love is one of the most important feelings in the world – and the most confusing. Both secular and religious thinkers agree that love plays a central role in our life. We are told that “love is a many-splendored thing” and that “love makes the world go round.”

Psychologists have concluded that to feel love and be loved is a primary human emotional need. For love, we will climb mountains, cross seas, traverse desert sands, and endure untold hardships. Without love, mountains become