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Scientific evidence explains why some healers see the ‘aura’ of people

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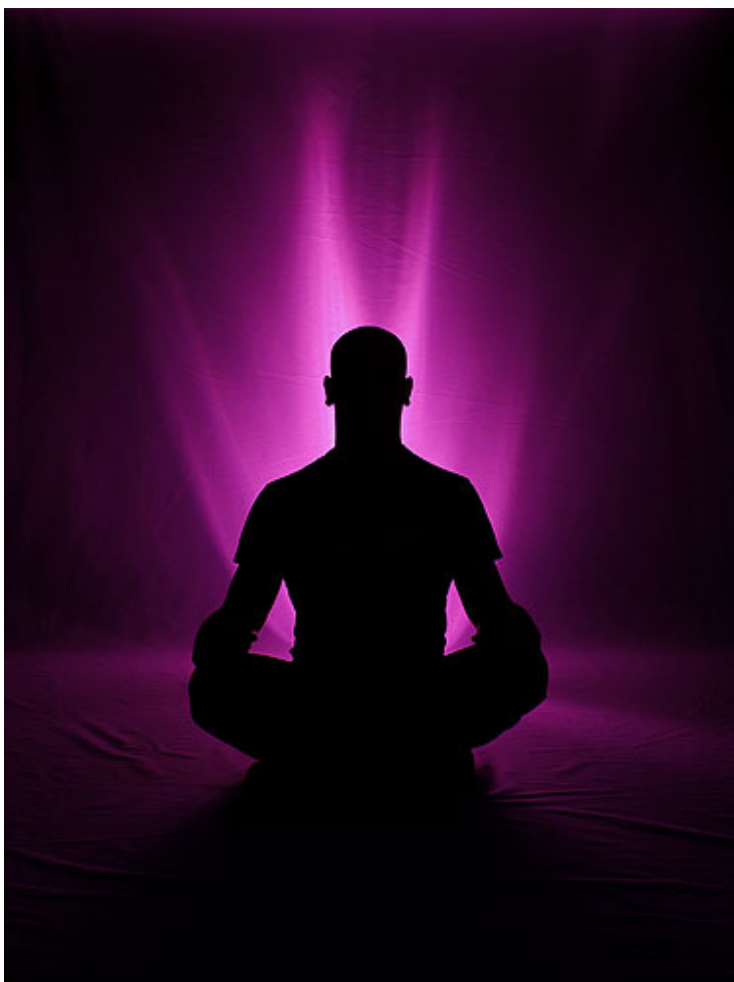
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You may call them ‘healers’, you may call them ‘quacks’, but a scientific study conducted in Spain has shown many of these people display a neuropsychological phenomenon known as “synesthesia” (specifically, “emotional synesthesia”), giving a valuable explanation of their ‘abilities’.



The name 'synesthesia' explains the condition pretty good: in Greek, 'syn' means 'together' and 'aisthesis' means 'sensation'. Basically, it is a neurological condition in which one cognitive pattern leads to another cognitive pattern, practically mixing your senses. This way, synesthetes can see or even taste a sound, or they can hear a smell, or associate people with a certain color or song.

This is the first time anybody has ever tried to find an explanation for the esoteric phenomenon of the aura, a supposed energy field of luminous radiation surrounding a person as a halo, imperceptible to most. Of course, nowadays, when somebody claims to see people's auras, he is immediately classified as a quirk or somebody with a weirder sense of humor, but according to this study published in the prestigious journal [*Consciousness and Cognition*](#), he is most likely synesthetic.

The [University of Granada](#) researchers, which conducted the study, noted that "*not all healers are synesthetes, but there is a higher prevalence of this phenomenon among them*". Synesthesia is involuntary and automatic, but it affects an extremely low number of people, and it comes in different shapes; in order to see if there is indeed a correlation between the condition and seeing auras, researchers interviewed some well known people, including a healer from Granada "Esteban Sánchez Casas", known as "El Santón de Baza".

Many people attribute paranormal powers to El Santon, but researchers concluded he is obviously synesthetic, to be more clear, he presents face-color synesthesia (the brain region responsible for face recognition is associated with the color-processing region), touch-mirror synesthesia (when the synesthete observes a person who is being touched or is experiencing pain, s/he experiences the same), high empathy (the ability to feel what other person is feeling), and schizotypy (certain personality traits in healthy people involving slight paranoia and delusions) – he is indeed a remarkable case.



“These capacities make synesthetes have the ability to make people feel understood, and provide them with special emotion and pain reading skills”, the researchers explain.

In light of these recent conclusions, researchers now believe healers place a significant placebo effect on patients, especially as “*some healers really have the ability to see people’s auras and feel the pain in others due to synesthesia*“. But as well as tricking the patients into healing themselves, scientists believe healers are also deceiving themselves.

“[They] have abilities and attitudes that make them believe in their ability to heal other people, but it is actually a case of self-deception, as synesthesia is not an extrasensory power, but a subjective and ‘adorned’ perception of reality”.

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Andrei is no scientist, but from an early age, he has been fascinated by science; that's why he went to college, and signed up for Geophysics. Feeling that there's a huge gap between science and average people, he rallied TP, started ZME Science, and gave it a green twist too.

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