

Psych-Out :: Psyching Life at the Margins

behavior decisionmaking emotion oursenses perception thought

The Cobra and the Mongoose: psychics, mindreaders and rogue magicians

October 1st, 2008



Tarot. Astrology. Mind-reading. Channeling. Make these claims to a magician, and be prepared to dodge his bite. In the magician's world, psychics are at worst liars, cheats, and swindlers who prey on people's pain. At best, they are self-deceived charlatans — highly intuitive, perhaps —but gullible to their own trickery.

1) Cognitive scientists and visual neuroscientists are now utilizing magicians and their tricks to study such phenomena as visual tracking, attention, and awareness. Stephen Macknik, Ph.D., director of the Laboratory of Behavioral Neurophysiology at Barrow Neurological Institute at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center, and Susana Martinez-Conde, Ph.D., director of the Laboratory of Visual Neuroscience, are working with magicians James Randi (The Amazing Randi), Teller (of Penn & Teller), Apollo Robbins, Mac King and John Thomson (The Great Tomsoni).

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