

Renée Haynes

Renée Haynes (1906-1994) was an English historian and psychical researcher who wrote extensively about psi phenomena. Haynes coined the term 'boggle threshold', which is widely used in parapsychology to indicate the point at which tolerance of an anomalous claim turns to disbelief, and which varies from one person to another.

Life and Career

Renée Oriana Haynes was born in London on July 23, 1906. Her father was a lawyer, her mother a granddaughter of [TH Huxley](#). She read law and history at St Hugh's College, Oxford and subsequently worked for the publishers Geoffrey Bles in London. She married Jarrard Tickell, a journalist and novelist in 1929 and started writing books at around this time. In the 1940s she worked for the British Council. She converted to Catholicism in 1942. In 1946 she became a member of the [Society for Psychical Research](#).

Psychical Research

Haynes's interest in psychical research began with vivid precognitive dreams. Some of these she described in her 1961 book *The Hidden Springs: An Enquiry into Extra-sensory Perception*, a study of spontaneous experiences. She was less interested in mass experiments and statistical evaluations, stating that 'there is undue reverence for that sacred object the computer'¹ - a stance that was criticized by some of her colleagues.² Some also disagreed with her tendency to dismiss the objections of psi-sceptics.³ Haynes's account of the SPR's century of research, *The Society for Psychical Research 1882-1982: A History*, was praised for acquainting the general public with its existence and activities, but was also criticized for being poorly documented.⁴

Haynes served on the SPR council from 1957. In 1970 she became the editor of its quarterly Journal, holding the post until 1981.

Boggle Threshold

Haynes coined the colloquial term '[boggle threshold](#)', the point at which the mental discomfort caused by a new idea or claim causes a person to reject it as untrue. This has been widely used in parapsychology to refer to the variation in personal levels of resistance to paranormal claims. See [Boggle Threshold](#).

Selected Publications

Books

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Endnotes

Footnotes

- [1](#). Cited in Berger (1991), 176.
- [2](#). Beloff (1993), 78.
- [3](#). Beloff (1983), 140.
- [4](#). Alvarado (1983), 156.

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