**RESEARCH
ARTICLE**

Trained Transliminals: Exploring Anomalous Experiences and Psi in Magical Practitioners

Brian Laythe

journal@scientificexploration.org

orcid.org/0000-0001-9081-2253

Natalie Roberts

Gordon White

Damien J. Houran

HIGHLIGHTS

A group of devoted magic practitioners showed 'thin' mental boundaries and measurable ESP ability, though the scoring patterns might suggest that they resist modern research methods.

ABSTRACT

This study examines a body of engaged "ritual magic practitioners" to understand their methods and techniques for facilitating putative parapsychological outcomes in everyday life, as well as outcomes on a computerized test of putative psi. We hypothesized that the combination of meditation, visualization, and related mental exercises at the core of magical practice relates to both invoked anomalous phenomena and spontaneously-occurring anomalous phenomena, and further that the perceptual-personality variable of transliminality (i.e., loose mental boundary functioning) is integral to this process. Likewise, we also anticipated that these associations would enable ritual magicians to score significantly above-chance on the psi test. A split-sample analysis found a positive and statistically significant series of relationships between transliminality and the majority of measured variables within the sample, and notably those involving questionnaire measures of subjective and objective anomalies as well as daily mental exercises. The ritual magicians also performed significantly below-chance ($p < .01$ for several conditions) on the psi test, as a function of open testing of ESP or using ritual to influence the test. We discuss these results in terms of significant predictions of trait and practice variables on ESP scoring, as well as the evidence that magical practice may represent techniques in which a transliminal dis-ease model might be better remediated.

KEYWORDS

Altered states, empiricism, liminality, mental imagery, psi, ritual magic.

INTRODUCTION

One might think that among millions of people who are enthusiastically engaged with the paranormal, or the smaller body of scientists studying this domain, a good number would also possess a general understanding of practices related to ceremonial or ritual magic (also known as theurgy or high magic), i.e., the use of rituals, implements, incantations, in conjunction with mental visualization skills to produce a controlled anomalous effect. One might further assume this is the case given the decades-long interest in mediums and spiritualists that continues to this day (e.g., Beischel & Schwartz, 2007; Beischel et al., 2015; Wahbeh et al., 2023). However, and with our appreciation, it appears that the consciousness researcher Dean Radin (2018) offered a popular parapsy-

chology-oriented book addressing this sub-culture, but we note previous infrequent work which has examined occult practitioners. (e.g., Mayer, 2009; Staniford, 1982; Winkelman et al., 1982; Winkelman, 1992). The general historical oversight of this historic-cultural group is unfortunate, as we think that magicians are a potential source of "exceptional subjects" for psi research and can thus provide critical insights for advancing our knowledge of the key variables mediators or moderators of ostensible living-agent psi (Rock et al., 2023), discarnate agency (i.e. Merlin, 2023), and haunt-type episodes (e.g., Laythe et al., 2022).

The terms "magician", "magus", "mage", "wiccan", "pagan", and "satanist" (note these terms are not necessarily synonymous), put bluntly, are awash with religio-cultural connotations and biases. We might safely posit that the reason most paranormal enthusiasts and anomalists are not familiar with this population is due to several historical and socio-cultural influences. First, magic has been an esoteric (i.e., hidden) practice in contrast to its much larger cousin religion, an exoteric (i.e., outward) spiritual practice which has the benefit of cultural endorsement and large numbers of followers to engender its norms on society (Durkheim, i.e., Hilbert, 2009; Marks, 1974). Notably, we do not condemn the latter but note it to highlight that historically, the practice of magic has been taboo for various reasons, with potentially severe consequences in society for those who were either caught or admitted to the practice (Godsen, 2020; Skinner, 2014). As such, its nature, practices, and goals have remained hidden knowledge, often guarded by gatekeepers of various traditions and grimoires (e.g., Peterson, 2016; *The Sworn Book of Honorious*, see pg. 51 as an example of a grimoire oath).

Despite magic's obscurity in academic and paranormal circles, our goal is to provide the reader with a "working model" for understanding the practices and outcomes of magic from a parapsychological perspective and provide the first (to our knowledge) exploratory data of these practitioners by examining (a) individual differences that mediate anomalous experiences (e.g., transliminality or paranormal belief), (b) the types and kinds of anomalous events that are fostered or generally manifest within magic contexts, (c) how these magicians' mental practices relate to the previous points, and (d) their performance on tests of putative psi.

We would emphasize here that this work is not a detailed historical examination of magical practice, and certainly not a comprehensive examination of the *differences between* the legion of deities, symbols, specific prayers, or specific invocations of myriad forms of magical practice around the world, or the general terminology of magic historically or academically (e.g., Bailey, 2006).

Nor is the current work examining the intricate historical lineage of which person or group progressed magic in a certain way (i.e., Hanegraaff, 2009; Kieckhefer, 2006).

Indeed, our research goals are the opposite. The current work wishes to demonstrate a *commonality of a 'practiced framework'* with magic, a psychologically and procedurally modellable framework, noting that a brief perusal of magical practice will demonstrate to the reader, regardless of entity, pantheon, or belief, that vast majority of magical practice involves common 'cook-book methods' with common preliminary practices and invocation or spell practices which infer clear psychological processes, regardless of which specific religion, culture, or historical period one is examining. Thus, readers familiar with the history of magic will find mostly primary sources (i.e. grimoires) noted here, and the mention of authors who clearly contributed to the popularist beliefs and methods of magic since Victorian times in the West. As most readers are likely to be unfamiliar with these practices, we attempt to briefly demonstrate a 'generalist model' with a brief sociocultural exploration of magical practice, followed by comparisons of magicians, mediums, and psychics in relation to their generation of altered states of consciousness (ASCs).

Modeling of the Magician

The above cultural and historical conditions make defining commonalities among magical practitioners exceedingly difficult and by no means definitive or comprehensive. From a social science perspective, one could model Magical communities in a *social identity context*, i.e., a myriad of small groups with some commonalities, albeit powerful in-group and out-group social distinctions sometimes keep them at odds (Tajfel & Turner,1979; Gomez et al.,2008; Gomez et al., 2011; Gomez et al., 2013). But also feasible is a more traditional *Marxist sociological perspective* (Marx, 1972), in which multiple and small "low-power" cohesive groups compete for limited cultural resources. Whereas all such practitioner groups, in fact, practice ritual magic (i.e., a structured or procedural method for spiritual contact or synchronistic practical outcomes), the adoption of a wide array of deity pantheons (e.g., the Roman or Egyptian gods), spirits (e.g., Judeo-Christian cosmologies versus Greek, Roman, or Norse cosmologies), and exoteric religious influences (e.g., Buddhist versus Judeo Christian) create plenty of opportunities for a lack of cohesion across the magical community at large. Marking boundaries between these groups becomes more difficult due to the fact that groups or individual magicians may adopt multiple pantheons at the same time (i.e., angelic and Norse deities), sometimes

blending the mythologies of these pantheons. Pantheon exclusivity is not an enforced moray in magic, and as such, multiple religious cultures can and do blend due to cultural pressures and multiple culture transitions over time (e.g., Santeria and Voudon are a mixture of Catholicism and the Nigerian Yoruba religions; see Gonzalez-Whippler, 1989).

Second, here we might find the classical divisions between magic and religion provided by Durkheim (e.g., Pickering, 2009) useful, if not definitive. Durkheim differentiated magical practice and religion by dividing those who "ask" divine forces to intervene (i.e., prayer and religion) from those who "demand" spiritual forces to intervene (i.e., magic). Noting this distinction, both practices invoke spiritual forces or generic energies of a specific type or flavor. To create some type of intervention, however, the religious individual requests spiritual forces to help, while the magician invokes and commands spiritual forces to intervene. Obviously, social scientists can interpret this as an internal or external locus of control framed in spiritistic terms (Levenson, 1973; Levenson & Mahler, 1975; Levenson & Miller, 1976). This parallel also includes broad comparisons to intrinsic or extrinsic religiosity measures (Meadow & Kahoe, 1984; Morris & Hood, 1981). Of course, the aspect of self-examining religion might further align to religiosity as measured by "quest" orientations, i.e., religion or spiritual belief guided by seeking and updating one's beliefs as new spiritual information is provided (see, e.g., Altemeyer & Hunsburger, 1992). However, given a severe paucity of research samples consisting of vetted magic practitioners, all the above models are, arguably, preliminary hypotheses in terms of 'best fit'.

However, in separating religion from magic, we would be remiss not to include Stephen Skinner's (2014) model that posits a continuum of magic versus mystery schools versus religion in terms of the specificity of the number of people and the degree to which these spiritual actions serve a broad community or a specific individual. Highlighting the above, he notes that separating religion from magic can be highlighted by five factors. These include audience (i.e., the broad audience religion serves versus the one magician), secrecy (i.e., the extent practices are publicly shared), degree of specificity in objectives (i.e., public and communal blessings in religion versus the specific act asked by a magician), range of entities employed (i.e., the endorsement of particular entities, as opposed to broad acceptance and use of all known entities), and privacy (i.e., public and communal ritual versus private and exclusive magical acts). Skinner's (2014) model, in many ways, provides a much greater definition and specificity by highlighting the distinction between the 'public' versus 'private' nature of these spiritual practices. In-

deed, one might summarize magical practice as a private, personal, and goal-targeted spiritual practice.

Finally, magic has varying beliefs of magic being "external" or "internal". In this sense, and with an obvious popularist influence of empiricism in the Victorian era (e.g., Blavatsky, 2016; Regardie, 1995), magicians often debate the degree to which magic is "psychological" or "spiritual." Notably, some communities embrace both views while others altogether ignore the apparent division. Victorian occultism (i.e., above) made separations between *high magic* (i.e., practices designed to make fundamental changes within the psyche) versus *low magic* (i.e., practices applied in a traditional sense to create beneficial external outcomes) (Mathers, 1971). Yet magic contains myriad techniques for altering the psyche, both in ASCs and specific rituals for changing emotional or thinking aspects of the self, and historically appears as a likely candidate for both the modern practice of hypnosis and guided imagery within clinical psychology contexts (e.g., Gruzelier, 2002; Sell, Moller & Taubner, 2018; Smoot-Tramont, 2023; Zech et al., 2017). Indeed, noting the contribution of Jewish mysticism as well as Greek and Egyptian 'mythology' by Carl Jung (e.g., Jung et al., 2009; Jung, 1968) in psychology is relevant here. Jung's application of archetypes because of his studies in magic and mysticism represents a variety of 'internal' personalities which an individual may interact with. The only difference between Jung's therapeutic model and magical perspectives is that the Magician might debate that these 'internal' personalities may not actually be 'internal', but to some degree 'external' and discarnate.

Methods and Commonalities of Magical Practice

While pantheons, religions, and beliefs vary widely and even co-mingle amongst magicians, practical commonalities (i.e., procedural or systematic methods) across diverse magical practices do occur. This is particularly true with regard to the specific tactics or methods employed, as opposed to the diverse cosmologies or spirits being invoked. Magical practice involves a 'recipe/trade/craft' approach in which initial seemingly unrelated practices and disciplines need to be developed before the practice of 'magic' can occur. Translated directly, magic is easily mirrored and influenced by yoga and related meditative practices of the East (e.g., Blavatsky, 2016; Regardie, 2016a). Certainly, from the Victorian era forward, practicing magicians have regularly engaged in meditation, which fosters visual imagery skills (Regardie, 2016; White, 2018), inducing ASCs (taking on God forms, Regardie, 1989; 2016b), traditional forms of meditation (e.g., Fortune & Knight, 1997), and the fostering of men-

tal focus (Mathers, 1971). We emphasize that while the above references are not exhaustive, they do represent a highly common theme across all magical literature with regards to the learned ability to focus the will and intent of the magician toward spiritual communication or the production of practical outcomes.

Historical evidence from Grimoires (i.e., books of magic spells and techniques) supports these aforementioned practices well before the Victorian era. If examined from modern social science in terms of central and peripheral persuasion (Petty & Cappico ,1984), self-induced flurries of psychosomatic effects (Lorber, Mazzoni, & Kirsch, 2007), or dissociative states or other ASCs deliberately cultivated via mirror-gazing and related protocols (Caputo, 2010, 2013, 2021; Derome et al., 2022), it seems the "recipe" of magic easily represents what might be characterized as "self-created and systematic experimental induction techniques" for creating purported anomalous or parapsychological effects through ASC's.

Recent examples of parapsychological research will use "manipulations" or "treatments" such as the creation of a room conducive to studying seance effects, with the addition of meditative and ritual exercises (Laythe, Laythe, & Woodward, 2017) or meditation as a condition of either psi (Alvarado, 1988; Nash, 1982; Palmer, Khamashta, & Israelson, 1979; Rao & Rao, 1982; Stenkamp, 2005) or healing practices (Anderson et al., 2015; Midilli & Eser, 2015; Rao et al., 2016). Historically, grimoires show similar practices going back at least to the 5th century, but likely much longer if ancient Egyptian works are considered (cf. Skinner, 2014).

For example, the *Hygromanteia* (Marathakis, 2017) proscribes summoning a protracted set of operations to include a place of isolation, the specific design of a detailed circle, the placement of various incense, the use of a pre-sanctified knife, and a series of invocations involving various demands and name of God and spirits (pp. 277-281). Importantly, the magician using these methods must memorize and engage in protracted prayers and invocations just to perform the ritual. Grimoires from the 1600's such as the *Book of Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* (Mathers, 1975), endorse a multi-month project in seeking one's "Holy Guardian Angel" upon which the method of obtaining this connection involves daily washing with specific prayers for a period of two lunar months, noting as a footnote regarding successful prayer that "This is the great point to be studied in all magical operations soever, and unless the whole heart and soul and faith go with the ceremony, there can be no reliable result produced" (Mathers, 1975, p. 65). It further indicates chastity during the entire period, abandoning all business and commerce, two hours per day reading scripture and holy books, and avoiding alcohol while rising before sunrise. Notably, the above two-month preparatory period prepares the initiate for the *second* phase of two months which ascribes additional goals towards the final project of communing with the HGA. Additional examples from the *Goetia* (Mathers, 1995) and *The Sworn Book of Honorious* (Peterson, 2016), similarly eschew complex details, components, and practices towards the creation of magic. In sum, the theme extant in nearly all Grimoires shows systematic methods in a general order, which vary in their dedication and time commitment, as well as ideology, but appear to be procedurally consistent.

Magical Method, Transliminality, and the Science of Parapsychology

Based on the above, and consistent with Radin's (2018) perspective, one way to model magic is to consider historical and current magical practice as self-induced manipulation of the psyche to produce synchronistic or parapsychological effects. For those familiar with anomalistic research, the involvement of procedure, meditative techniques, ASCs, and guided visualization in relation to psi-type effects should seem highly familiar, as they are obvious personal procedures that have been directly mimicked in the laboratory in relation to psi (cf. Radin, 2018). There are many examples from decades of research showing parapsychological effects relative to mirror-gazing (Caputo, 2010), the role of dissociation and ASCs in mediumship (Wahbeh et al., 2023), conscious intention work (Bengston & Krinsley, 2000; Bengston et al., 2023; McTaggert, 2008), examinations of Reiki and energy effects (Moga & Bengston, 2010; Moga, 2014;2017), and recent studies examining "the right person in the right environment" with regards to anomalous experiences and putative psi effects (Laythe et al., 2022). We hypothesize that magical practitioner communities may represent ideal collaborators to further our understanding of the complex roles of belief, individual differences, interpretation, and outcomes associated with psi phenomena (see, e.g., Ventola et al., 2019). Our rationale is simple and based within three justifiable points:

1. Magical practitioners engage in a variety of regular specific practices, which can differ based on the broad practical goal desired (e.g., speaking with ancestors versus healing, hexes, or love-spells) purposely designed to invoke paranormal effects. They are trained methodological paranormalists, in direct contrast to the specific (and less proscribed) subsets of magical acts of channeling or necromancy of psychics or mediums typically studied. As such, the effects of their

specific methods and cognitions can directly be tested for accuracy or efficacy, in which we would expect to see significant relationships despite the diversity of ideological diversity present in this magical sample, because the underlying methods are similar.

2. Magicians, as a subset of the 'paranormal community', are likely to be high in transliminality and thus might use magical techniques to focus this to their own benefit.

3. Magicians may well represent a managed or controlled version of Haunted People Syndrome (i.e., recurrent anomalous experiences facilitated by hyper-sensitivities, exacerbated by dis-ease states, and sustained by contagious processes; cf. Houran & Laythe 2022) but use magical practices to moderate or benefit from psychic "intrusions, visualizations, or somatosensory effects."

The Case for Magic and Transliminality

One of the more well-validated variables related to paranormal phenomena is the concept of transliminality. This is a perceptual-personality variable comparable to Hartmann's (1991) mental boundary construct (Houran, Thalbourne, & Hartmann, 2003; Lange, Houran, Evans, & Lynn, 2018; Thalbourne & Maltby, 2008), which notably is a predecessor of more recent constructs of "sensory processing sensitivity" (Aron & Aron, 1997; Greven et al., 2019). Looking at general associations between transliminality and neurological phenomena, transliminality has been associated with neuroplasticity (e.g., Thalbourne, Crawley, & Houran, 2003; Thalbourne et al., 2001; Thalbourne & Maltby, 2008), and syncretic cognitions (e.g., Evans et al., 2019; Houran et al., 2006; Lange et al., 2019).

In terms of its functionality, Transliminality is specifically defined as "hypothesized tendency for psychological material to cross (*trans*) thresholds (*limines*) into or out of consciousness" (Thalbourne & Houran, 2000, p. 853), and subsequently modified by Thalbourne and Maltby (2008), to be defined as "a hypersensitivity to psychological material originating in (a) the unconscious, and/or (b) the external environment" (p. 1618). The latter definition of tranliminality is highly relevant to research on entity encounter experiences, noting that high-transliminals are more prone to sensitivities within a wide range of stimuli (Evans et al., 2019; Jawer & Micozzi, 2009; Thalbourne et al., 2001) both from the external environment, as well as both conscious and unconscious internal psychology.

Given the increased 'flow' of information from the unconscious and environment in transliminals, it should not surprise the reader that Transliminality is thus highly related to a bevy of other ASCs (Rock et al., 2015; Thal-

bourne & Houran, 2000). These include dissociation (Evans et al., 2019) and absorption (Rock et al., 2023; Thalbourne, 2010, but see Ventola et al., 2019 for a summary of these variables). As such, transliminality, at worst, represents a highly correlated neurologically correlated trait construct of ASCs and, at best, an underlying core component of all of the above.

However, that is not to say that transliminality should be automatically equated to psychosis-related mental illness, which represents a statistically poor explanation for paranormal experiences (Houran & Laythe, 2022; Rock et al., 2023). Rather, increasing research suggests that transliminality manifests as part of "the right person in the right environment" (Laythe et al., 2022) with regard to experiences of high strangeness. Accordingly, a transliminal model implies that ghostly episodes and kindred phenomena are associated with a particular psychometric profile and more accurately represents hypersensitivity to both internal and external stimulus (Laythe et al., 2022). It is historically significant to mention that the 3rd century Greek philosopher, Iamblichus, in his work *On the Mysteries*, writes of a strikingly similar observation to the "right person in the right environment" and the ideas of transliminality. When discussing why theurgy does not seem to work for all who may attempt it, Iamblichus includes an unmistakable variation of right person, right place in the letter of Porphyry to Anebo, "that not all men, but those that are more simple and young are more adapted to predictions" (Taylor, 2012, pg. 18). The writing further clarifies that when "the senses are occupied, that fumigations are introduced, and that invocations are employed" (Taylor, 2012, pg. 18), the optimal conditions for ritual are met, suggesting that a state of dis-ease induced through the means of ritually decorated environments may aid those proficient in theurgy in achieving such splendored results. We note here that none of the above definitions neither preclude nor necessarily endorse parapsychological components to the above model.

When a "thin boundary structure" is naturally associated with the above dissociative and ASC components of psychological functioning, it seems a valid hypothesis to claim that if transliminality was not present within a magical practitioner, one would wish that it was. The clear associations and ability to receive inputs more easily from the unconscious, conscious, and external environment (cf., Laythe et al., 2022) would only facilitate and strengthen the core mental exercises of visual and guided imagery, meditation, and absorption involved with the self and ritual environment in terms of conducting magic. Indeed, high transliminality, when utilized and managed in the context of a set of exercises that trains the individual to shape, classify, or control mental imagery and

sensory experiences, would be likely to foster magical experiences. This hypothesis is certainly supported by mirror-gazing studies (Caputo, 2010), where multiple studies show alterations in perception and visions with untrained participants, often within a period of slightly over a minute (see Caputo 2010, 2013, 2021). Perhaps more importantly, noting Durkhiem's (cf. Pickering, 2009) and Skinner's (2014) models of religion and magic, the magical practitioner has a real or perceived sense of control over paranormal phenomena through their practice and ritual, as opposed to the religious and many experiencers of high-strangeness.

Indeed, one of the key differences that can be shown between the magician who invokes or controls spirits and paranormal phenomena versus existing research in those who have a variety of paranormal experiences is a component of control. Notably, *Haunted People Syndrome* (Laythe et al., 2021, 2022) denotes that within an interactionist framework, transliminality, or related measures of permeable boundaries, seems to be a key variable in relationship to hauntings and related forms of entity encounters and high strangeness (e.g., Houran et al., 2003; Kumar & Pekala, 2001; Simmonds-Moore et al., 2019). Indeed, previous research shows that transliminality predicts haunting experiences above and beyond cognitive, personality, and trait variables (Ventola et al., 2019; Lange, Laythe & Houran 2023). However, one of the key distinguishing features of entity encounter experiences and magic is that the former often "happens" to the percipient, while the latter invokes or controls it.

For instance, when examining the core features of paranormal experiences with the Survey of Strange Events (SSE: Houran et al., 2019a; 2019b), a Rasch-scaled measure of objective (i.e., directly observable) versus subjective (i.e. internally experienced) phenomena related to hauntings, various profiles were developed which notably showed different types of phenomena hierarchies in relation to whether the participant was seeking a paranormal experience (i.e. lifestyle) versus spontaneous accounts. More importantly for the current work, applications to the SSE with regards to imaginary friends (i.e., Little, Laythe, & Houran, 2021; Laythe, Houran, & Little, 2021) and gang-stalking accounts (i.e., OKeefe et al., 2019; Lange et al., 2020) suggest that the core phenomenological experiences featured in the SSE are similarly endorsed within the above scenarios, suggesting that there is a "core phenomenology" of high strangeness which is interpreted in accordance with the environment and beliefs of the person interacting with anomalous phenomena (Laythe et al., 2022). But to be clear, in all of the above instances where SSE phenomena are noted, there are clear indicators that the percipient did not seek out the anomalous-paranor-

mal experiences, and these anomalous-paranormal experiences subsequently generate anxiety and distress. Thus, the evidence appears to point to the fact that (a). there is a robust predictive relationship between transliminality and endorsing SSE phenomena, (b). that objective and subjective phenomena appear "intertwined" within a single-dimensional probabilistic hierarchy, and (c). these same phenomena are present in unidimensional patterns when non-haunting types of high-strangeness are examined (for a summary, see Laythe et al., 2022).

The spontaneous and fear-generating aspects of paranormal experience are prevalent enough that examination into case studies of hauntings and poltergeists has led us to a "transliminal dis-ease model" nested into features we more generally denote as Haunted People Syndrome (HP-S: Houran & Laythe, 2022; O'Keefe et al., 2019; Lange et al., 2020; Laythe et al., 2021). Indeed, reviews of poltergeist literature (i.e., Houran et al., 2022) and long-term hauntings (Houran & Laythe, 2022) suggest that hauntings can generally fit into unwanted paranormal intrusions that repeatedly occur to people over time.

These phenomena create increasing degrees of fear, distress, and dis-ease, that increase or decrease as a function of psychosocial stressors, contagion among other family members and friends, and the worldview and belief system of the person (or persons) experiencing it (Houran & Laythe, 2022; Laythe et al., 2022; Ritson, Little, Laythe & Houran, 2020). Indeed, Houran and Laythe (2022) found in their case study that the core percipient (or focus person) had a long history of paranormal phenomena, as well as a family who raised her with similar sensitivities. Of key interest to the above case is that despite what appears to be strong degrees of transliminality and "spiritual sensitivity", at no point were members of this family trained or taught how to either engage with or control these psychic visions or mental intrusions that consistently entered their life.

The above highlights that the paranormal experient, in contrast to the magician, holds both similarities and differences. In terms of the former, the body of the above research makes it likely that magicians (perhaps obviously) experience paranormal phenomena and, secondly, are likely to have higher degrees of transliminality compared to average individuals, given the above research which shows both paranormal phenomena and transliminality in a variety of 'high-strangeness' explanatory systems and varying environments (cf. Laythe et al., 2022). To the latter, magicians appear to differ in the fact that they practice methods and techniques to purposely invoke these paranormal effects, in contrast to having them 'happen' against their will. Thus, an effective way to describe the

ritual magician's psychological profile that can 'invoke' high-strangeness is the concept of 'trained transliminals' or, people with naturally higher levels of transliminality (and associated ASCs), through which magical ritual and meditative processes can become focused or amplified. As such, we might propose that earlier case studies of HP-S (cf. Houran et al., 2022), represent high tranliminals *without* benefit of the aforementioned mental magical methods. In turn, the untrained transliminal is subject to more frequent, random, or unwanted mental intrusions that foster anxiety and distress (i.e., dis-ease) and this circumstance robs "haunted people" of a a sense of control over their own lives.

Finally, assuming our idea of magicians as "trained transliminals" is valid, we would then ask what it is that magicians are controlling. They are ostensibly directing or harnessing a range of anomalous phenomena towards specific ends that are desired by the magician, again, as opposed to waiting for random parapsychological effects to "happen" to them. We can explore this hypothesis via psi-testing with ritual magicians. Fortunately for us, transliminality also seems to be a predictor of psi outcomes (Houran & Lange, 2012; Lange & Houran, 2013; Storm & Thalbourne, 1999;2001), and notably, Lange, Laythe, & Houran (2023) showed an interaction between purportedly haunted versus non-haunted environments, degrees of transliminality and paranormal belief, and outcomes on a computerized test of psi. Specifically, participants high in both transliminality and paranormal belief scored significantly higher on the psi test when present within "haunted" (or enchanted) versus "unhaunted" (or disenchanted) environments. This clearly affirms the idea that parapsychological phenomena involve an interaction between the right people in the right environments.

Proposed Model and Summary

In summary, we propose that the methods and techniques of magical practitioners, demonstrated through the practice's historical use of complex ASC-generating techniques with historically documented environmental cues (i.e., Mathers, 1975), personal ritual and focus, and overt similarities with the paranormal phenomena reported in other forms of high-strangeness (i.e. Laythe et al., 2022), makes them a population that is not only likely to be highly transliminal, but also trained by universal magical techniques to better control the various sensitivities that come with this profile (for an overview, see Evans et al., 2019). We further posit, due to previous and recent work, that the combination of transliminality and mental methods may represent a "formula" by which magicians may fare better with invoked psi than either

chance levels or outcomes derived from the general population. Accordingly, this unprecedented study of practicing magicians explores the patterns in their (a) levels of transliminality and paranormal belief, (b) self-reported anomalous phenomena, (c) general magical, spiritual, or meditative practices, along with the type of sensorial information interpreted as "spirit and entity contact," and (d) performance on a computerized test of putative psi.

METHOD

Preliminaries

We describe how we determined our research samples, all data exclusions (if any), specific research questions, applicable manipulations, and all measures and data abstractions used in the study, and we strived to follow the Journal Article Reporting Standards (JARS) (Kazak, 2018). Our design, analysis, and research materials were not pre-registered, so we note several points for the following analyses. *First*, given that empirical research with samples of actual magical practitioners is exceedingly rare, if non-existent, we perform a bevy of analyses within this paper using correlation and regression techniques to parse out preliminary relationships among trait, practice, and ESP variables. To this extent, our analyses and findings are deemed exploratory in an attempt to initially map demographic and practice characteristics of a magically practicing community. We clearly express, therefore, a need for further research and a replication of the results. But we should emphasize here that the present sample, vetted for its commitment to actual practical magical acts, should not be confused with respondents from online magical chat groups or social media-based occult identity forums. As with any ideological group, there are those who associate with said groups for the social recognition and identity that they bring, and those who actually practice their ideas (e.g., intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity, Morris & Hood, 1981). Our sample is arguably unique for its abundance of practicing members. Therefore, we extensively detail both the demographics and operational variables should future researchers wish to compare means and related scores on demographic variables in contrast to future samples.

Second, and with respect to the above, our split-sample analytic approach provides an automatic replication for the bulk of the exploratory findings reported here. This approach randomly divides a dataset into Training and Replication samples so that results from one sample can be validated in the other (for example, see, e.g., Laythe et al., 2018). Specifically, we report the replicated results in the analyses where both randomly assigned split samples show a significant relationship, creating an

effective combined *p*-value of .05 x .05 = .025, or .01 x .01 = .001 (representing the combined *p*-value of obtaining two significant findings across two samples). *Finally*, due to the self-selection of the sample and subsequent smaller sample sizes, we eschewed a split-sample replication for the analysis of the psi test results. Instead, we applied standard statistical analyses.

Participants

Data was derived from a total of 327 (Sample 1: *n* = 164 and Sample 2: *n* = 163) participants, comprising 184 (56.4%) male, 122 (37.4%) female, and 17 (6.1%) non-binary, transgender, agender, genderqueer or genderfluid participants. Participants' ages ranged between 19 and 74 years (*M* = 42.71; *SD* = 10.61). Participants also spanned 25 different countries, with the majority living in the United States (*n* = 181; 55.4%), United Kingdom (*n* = 53; 16.2%) and Australia (*n* = 28; 8.6%). The sample was predominantly White (*n* = 281; 85.9%), followed by Hispanic (*n* = 17; 5.2%) and mixed race (*n* = 16; 4.9%). Most participants (75%) had completed a tertiary qualification, most frequently holding a Bachelors (*n* = 117; 35.8%) or Master's degree (*n* = 73; 22.3%). No significant demographic differences were observed between samples. The entirety of the magical practitioner sample was recruited from the private membership cultivated by Gordon White of Rune Soup, a 10-year running educational site provided and founded by Gordon White. Rune Soup provides regular podcasts and videos directly relating to the practice, metaphysics, history, science, and philosophy of magic. Private membership individuals similarly have access to

well over 100 hours of courses on magic (all of which, via forums and assignments, facilitate practice and experimentation), the vast bulk of which represent content, sources, and context at a senior-level of college or early graduate school level of education in terms of academic or philosophical sources used in this context. The current sample were voluntary participants of *The Foundations*, a new series of courses which represented a detailed class addressing the basic principals and foundational practices of performing magic.

Demographics, Magical Characteristics, and Sensory Experience Variables

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics for all the following measures and variables.

Magical Practice Variables

Participants were asked how long they had actively practiced magic using a 8-point Likert style format with two year increments anchored by "*less than two years*", and "*more than 20 years*', including conducting rituals, "practical magic" and spells. From the above, about one-third (35.3%) of the sample practiced magic for four years or less, with 20.4% practicing for more than 20 years. Most participants indicated that they were taking the Foundations course as it was being released (*n* = 245; 74.9%), followed by those who were taking the course late but for the first time (*n* = 43; 13.1%) and those who were waiting for the material to be fully released (*n* = 13; 4.0%).

Household Variables

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations and Range of Scores on Measures

	Sample 1			Sample 2		
Instrument	Mean (*SD*)	Min.	Max.	Mean (*SD*)	Min.	Max.
New Age Philosophy	31.16 (4.76)	16.32	47.72	31.98 (5.59)	13.52	47.72
Trad. Paranormal Belief	29.40 (4.69)	16.71	43.24	29.34 (4.27)	16.71	43.24
Transliminality	28.81 (3.63)	19.9	37.3	29.07 (3.37)	21.1	37.3
SSE General	54.14 (9.43)	30.3	90.9	54.61 (9.80)	30.3	90.9
SSE Magic	48.32 (11.18)	22.3	90.9	48.46 (11.94)	22.3	90.9
Sight	2.53 (1.10)	1	5	2.66 (1.01)	1	5
Hearing	2.65 (1.13)	1	5	2.75 (1.27)	1	5
Touch	2.44 (1.32)	1	5	2.34 (1.28)	1	5
Taste	1.47 (0.87)	1	5	1.69 (1.05)	1	5
Smell	2.07 (1.29)	1	5	2.17 (1.38)	1	5
Prayer	3.95 (1.17)	1	5	4.07 (1.17)	1	5
Meditation visualisation	3.72 (1.13)	1	5	3.75 (1.17)	1	5
Meditation stillness	3.65 (1.29)	1	5	3.71 (1.24)	1	5
Daily rituals	3.74 (1.24)	1	5	3.77 (1.29)	1	5
Daily day to day insights	3.52 (1.32)	1	5	3.58 (1.16)	1	5
Daily dream intrusions	3.23 (1.27)	1	5	3.44 (1.26)	1	5
Insight scrutiny	3.45 (1.11)	1	5	3.62 (1.14)	1	5

Participants were asked a series of questions about their household composition and other household members. These items included how many people reside in your household, are there any members of your household who also practice magic? and from above, are there any members of the household participating in the course? All of the above items were asked in interval (exact number) format. From these questions, magical practitioners reported that they most frequently lived with one other person (*n* = 124; 38.3%), followed by living alone (*n* = 67; 20.7%) or with two other people (*n* = 62; 19.1%). While most participants indicated that they were the only ones in their household who practiced magic (*n* = 214; 65.4%), almost one-quarter of the sample lived with another person who practiced (*n* = 77; 23.5%), and a smaller proportion lived in a household where everyone practiced magic (*n* = 26; 8.0%). Similarly, most participants were the only ones in their household completing the Foundations course (*n* = 256; 78.3%).

Sensory Experience Items

Participants were asked how they receive information during spiritual or paranormal experiences with respect to their five senses. As an exploratory measure, these five items were arranged in a 5-point Likert format, which was designed to measure the distinction between internally perceived experiences (subjective), which increased in degrees towards what is perceived as externally perceived experiences (objective). Participants were asked to rate their paranormal experiences across all five senses with the following guide for rating: 1 = A core impulse or sense process in your mind only that you have to translate into speech or vision (or any of the other senses) inside your own mind., 2 = something between 1 and 3, or a combination of both., 3 = A direct sense impulse which

translates to hearing a sentence, seeing an image, the mental perception of touch, taste, or smelling something clearly in your imagination (mind's eye) only. 4 = Something between 3 and 5 or a combination of both.,5 = A spiritual message or sense that you perceive to see, feel, hear, etc......in your actual five senses (i.e., I actually saw, I actually heard, I actually smelled). Although each sense is treated separately for analyses, we note an underpinning relationship between the five senses and the degree to which a person perceives paranormal experience as subjective or objective, noting an overall alpha for these five items was .71.

Magic practitioner's responses for these items, for both samples, showed most participants received sensory information inside their mind or within their mind's eye (responses 1-3): sight (S1 = 81.6%; S2 = 81.4%), hearing (S1 = 69.2%; S2 = 76.8%), touch (S1 = 79.1%; S2 = 74.2%), taste (S1 = 89.7%; 95.3%), smell (S1 = 77.7%; S2 = 82.6%). A smaller proportion of both samples indicated that they receive sensory input beyond their mind's eye, including seeing, hearing and smelling stimuli (responses 4-5): sight (S1 = 18.4%; S2 = 18.6%), hearing (S1 = 30.9%; S2 = 23.2%), touch (S1 = 21.0%; S2 = 25.8%), taste (S1 = 10.3%; S2 = 4.7%), smell (S1 = 22.3%; S2 = 17.5%). See Table 1 for the mean scores for each sensory modality and Table 2 for the frequencies of each response option for both samples.

Daily Practice Variables

In order to assess ancillary variables to magical practice, as well as gaining contextual detail about the participant's general magical practices, the following questions were also asked on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 where: 1 = *rarely*, 3 = *sometimes*, and 5 = *frequently*. Questions included: "I engage in prayer; I engage in meditation fo-

Table 2. Frequency of Sensory Experiences Across Samples

Sensory Response	Sight S1 n	Sight S1 %	Sight S2 n	Sight S2 %	Hearing S1 n	Hearing S1 %	Hearing S2 n	Hearing S2 %	Touch S1 n	Touch S1 %	Touch S2 n	Touch S2 %	Taste S1 n	Taste S1 %	Taste S2 n	Taste S2 %	Smell S1 n	Smell S1 %	Smell S2 n	Smell S2 %
1. A core impulse or sense process in your mind only that you have to translate into speech or vision (or any of the other senses inside your own mind).	32	21	23	15	30	19	32	20	49	33	52	35	105	71	93	64	70	47	69	47
2. Something between 1 and 3, or a combination of both.	46	30	42	27	38	25	41	26	37	25	34	23	27	18	21	14	35	24	32	22
3. A direct sense impulse which translates to hearing a sentence, seeing an image, the mental perception of touch, taste, or smelling something clearly in your imagination (mind's eye) only.	49	31	64	41	51	33	37	23	26	17	31	21	10	6.7	17	12	18	12	14	9.5
4. Something between 3 and 5 or a combination of both.	22	14	24	15	29	19	33	21	27	18	21	14	5	3.4	14	9.6	15	10	19	13
5. A spiritual message or sense that you perceive to see, feel, hear, etc.	7	4.5	5	3.2	7	4.5	16	10	12	7.9	10	6.8	2	1.3	1	0.7	11	7.4	14	9.5

cused on visualization" (Western meditation); "I engage in meditation focused on stillness" (Eastern meditation); "I engage in daily rituals ascribed by my personal practice for spiritual health" (daily application); "I receive insights or spiritual communication during my day to day affairs" (uninvited insights); "I receive insights or spiritual communication through my dreams" (dream insights); and "I engage in intense scrutiny of the spiritual messages I receive" (critical analysis of insight material).

Standardized Measures

Revised Paranormal Belief Scale (RPBS) (Lange et al., 2000).

This measure is a 16-item Rasch scaled version of Tobacyk's (1988, 2004) original 26-item measure, based on a seven-point Likert scale anchored at "strongly disagree to strongly agree". Rasch scaling shows that the RPBS comprises a two-factor model representing New Age Philosophy (NAP: 11 items measuring a greater sense of control over interpersonal and external events) and Traditional Paranormal Beliefs (TPB: five items representing a culturally-transmitted and beneficial in maintaining social control via a belief in magic, determinism, and a mechanistic view of the world).

Revised Transliminality Scale (RTS: Lange et al., 2000; Houran et al., 2003)

The RTS is a Rasch-purified version of Thalbourne's (1998) original scale, representing 17 items in a T/F format. Previous research relates transliminality as an underlying structure regarding Hyperesthesia, (fleeting) Hypomanic or Manic Experience, Fantasy-Proneness, Absorption, Positive (and perhaps obsessional) Attitude Towards Dream Interpretation, Mystical Experience, and Magical Thinking (see Evans et al., 2019; Lange et al., 2019).

Survey of Strange Events (SSE: Houran et al., 2019a)

This is a 32-item Rasch (1960/1980) scaled measure of the overall "haunt intensity" (or perceptual depth) of a ghostly account or narrative via a "true/false" checklist of anomalous experiences inherent to these episodes. The SSE's Rasch item hierarchy represents the probabilistic ordering of S/O events according to their endorsement rates but rescaled into a metric called "logits." Higher logit values denote higher positions (or greater difficulty) on the Rasch scale (Bond & Fox, 2015). More information about the conceptual background and psychometric development of this instrument is provided by Houran et al. (2019a, 2019b). Rasch scaled scores range from 22.3 (=

raw score of 0) to 90.9 (= raw score of 32), with a *mean* of 50 and *SD* = 10, and Rasch reliability = 0.87. Higher scores correspond to a greater number and perceptual intensity of anomalies that define a percipient's cumulative experience of a ghostly episode. Supporting the SSE's construct and predictive validities, Houran et al. (2019b) found that the phenomenology of "spontaneous" accounts (i.e., ostensibly sincere and unprimed) differed significantly from control narratives from "primed conditions, fantasy scenarios, or deliberate fabrication." That is, spontaneous ghostly episodes have a specific sequence (or Rasch model) of S/O anomalies that is distinct from the details of narratives associated with other contexts.

Regarding the two samples' response patterns on the SSE, the two most frequently endorsed strange experiences in everyday life were "A sense of déjà vu, like something was strangely familiar to me about my thoughts, feelings or surroundings" (S1 = 93.8%; S2 = 96.9%), and "A negative feeling for no obvious reason, like anger, sadness, panic, or danger" (S1 = 89.0%; S2 = 84.0%). The next three most-endorsed items were the same for both samples; however, they were ranked in a different order. These included "Experiencing positive feelings for no obvious reason" (S1 = 87.0%; 82.0%), "The feeling of being watched or in the presence of an invisible being or force" (S1 = 85.8%; S2 = 82.1%), and "Odd bodily sensations, including dizziness and tingling" (S1 = 75.9%; S2 = 75.0%). Similarly, the five least-endorsed experiences in everyday life were the same for both samples; however, they were ranked in a different order. These included having "Fires start mysteriously" (S1 = 9.9%; S2 = 8.0%), "Seeing objects floating or flying in mid-air" (S1 = 15.4%; S2 = 16.8%), and "Being mysteriously touched in a threatening manner, including cuts, bites or shoves" (S1 = 24.1%; S2 = 21.6%).

There was greater variability across samples in the ranking of altered-anomalous events experienced during magical practice. While the order of items varied across samples, the five most-endorsed anomalies during magical practice were: "Experiencing positive feelings for no obvious reason" (S1 = 80.2%; S2 = 75.2%), "Mysterious feeling of being watched" (S1 = 79.0%; S2 = 77.2%), "Odd sensations, including dizziness and tingling" (S1 = 69.1%; S2 = 71.6%), "Communicating with the dead or other outside forces" (S1 = 68.7%; S2 = 72.2%), and "Experiencing déjà vu" (S1 = 60.1%; S2 = 58.0%). Similarly, while the order varied, the five least frequently endorsed strange events were the same for both samples, including having "Plumbing equipment malfunction" (S1 = 5.0%; S2 = 8.1%), "Hearing mysterious sounds via audio recorders" (S1 = 5.6%; S2 = 6.8-7.5%), "Seeing objects flying or floating in mid-air" (S1 = 6.3%; S2 = 5.0%), and having "Fires

Table 3. Frequency of Strange Events (SSE) in Everyday Life and During Magical Practice

Survey of Strange Events Item	SSE General				SSE Magic			
	S1		S2		S1		S2	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
I saw with my naked eye a non-descript visual image, like fog, shadow or unusual light	102	63	101	62.7	72	44.4	75	46.3
I saw with my naked eye an "obvious" ghost or apparition – a misty or translucent image with a human form	57	35.6	59	36.6	30	18.6	27	16.9
I saw with my naked eye an "un-obvious" ghost or apparition – a human form that looked like a living person	66	40.5	64	39.8	36	22.4	28	17.4
I smelled a mysterious odor that was pleasant	73	45.3	77	47.5	55	34	48	30
I smelled a mysterious odor that was unpleasant	64	39.5	56	34.8	24	14.9	33	20.4
I had a positive feeling for no obvious reason, like happiness, love, joy, or peace	141	87	132	82	130	80.2	121	75.2
I had a negative feeling for no obvious reason, like anger, sadness, panic, or danger	145	89	136	84	93	57.8	79	49.4
I felt odd sensations in my body, such as dizziness, tingling, electrical shock, or nausea (sick in my stomach)	123	75.9	120	75	112	69.1	116	71.6
I had a mysterious taste in my mouth	49	30.2	51	31.7	33	20.5	35	21.7
I felt guided, controlled or possessed by an outside force	70	43.2	80	49.7	86	53.1	86	53.4
I saw beings of divine or evil origin, such as angels or demons	39	24.5	46	28.4	61	37.9	56	34.8
I saw folklore-type beings that were not human, such as elves, fairies, or other types of "little people"	48	30	45	27.8	45	27.8	36	22.5
I communicated with the dead or other outside force	101	62	110	67.9	112	68.7	117	72.2
I had the mysterious feeling of being watched, or in the presence of an invisible being or force	139	85.8	133	82.1	128	79	125	77.2
I had a sense of déjà vu, like something was strangely familiar to me about my thoughts, feelings or surroundings	152	93.8	157	96.9	98	60.1	94	58
I heard mysterious sounds that could be recognized or identified, such as ghostly voices or music (with or without singing)	70	43.2	73	45.3	39	24.2	51	31.7
I heard mysterious "mechanical" or non-descript noises, such as tapping, knocking, rattling, banging, crashing, footsteps or the sound of opening/closing doors or drawers	94	58.4	83	51.9	45	28	45	28
I heard on an audio recorder mysterious sounds that could be recognized or identified, such as ghostly voices or music (with or without singing)	25	15.5	25	15.4	9	5.6	11	6.8
I heard on an audio recorder mysterious "mechanical" or non-descript noises, such as tapping, knocking, rattling, banging, crashing, footsteps or the sound of opening/closing doors or drawers	26	16	23	14.2	9	5.6	12	7.5
I felt a mysterious area of cold	91	56.5	98	60.5	64	39.8	67	41.6
I felt a mysterious area of heat	68	42.2	69	42.6	60	37.5	63	39.1
I experienced objects disappear or reappear around me	64	39.5	69	42.9	17	10.5	22	13.6
I saw objects moving on their own across a surface or falling	39	24.1	35	21.7	18	11.2	17	10.5
I saw objects flying or floating in midair	25	15.4	27	16.8	10	6.3	8	5
Electrical or mechanical appliances or equipment functioned improperly or not at all, including flickering lights, power surges or batteries "going dead" in electronic devices (e.g., camera, phone, etc.)	91	56.5	97	59.9	44	27.2	51	31.7
Pictures from my camera or mobile device captured unusual images, shapes, distortions or effects	49	30.1	54	33.3	19	11.8	15	9.3
Plumbing equipment or systems (faucets, disposal, toilet) functioned improperly or not at all	40	24.7	46	28.6	8	5	13	8.1
I saw objects breaking (or discovered them broken), like shattered or cracked glass, mirrors or housewares	44	27.3	50	31.3	23	14.2	23	14.2
I felt a breeze or a rush of wind or air, like something invisible was moving near me	98	60.1	98	60.5	94	58	91	56.5
Fires have started mysteriously	16	9.9	13	8	13	8	10	6.2
I was mysteriously touched in a non-threatening manner, like a tap, touch or light pressure on my body	89	54.9	84	52.2	77	47.5	70	43.2
I was mysteriously touched in a threatening manner, such as a cut, bite, scratch, shove, burn or strong pressure on my body	39	24.1	35	21.6	20	12.3	16	10

start mysteriously" (S1 = 8.0%; S2 = 6.2%). Table 3 gives the frequencies of anomalous events (per SSE item endorsements) in daily life versus during magical practice. Notably, more detailed comparisons are warranted in the context of the haunter profiles created by Houran et al. (2019a;2019b) and related SSE profiles (Little et al., 2021)

Table 4. Correlations Between Demographics, Measures and Individual Difference Variables

																		S2
Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1 Years Practiced		0.09	0.16	.38*	.44*	.20*	0.12	0.16	.26*	0.15	.21*	.26*	.30*	0.05	.25*	.25*	.20*	.27*
2 New Age Philosophy	0.06		.66*	0.09	0.05	0.13	.24*	0.15	0.09	0.11	0.01	.23*	.20*	0.01	.20*	.32*	.23*	.22*
3 Trad. Paranormal Belief	0	.56*		0.09	0.18	0.15	.23*	0.1	0.15	0.09	0.01	.23*	0.12	-0.06	0.08	.21*	0.09	.21*
4 SSE General	.28*	.22*	0.14		.76*	.61*	.31*	.39*	.29*	.28*	.36*	.24*	.31*	0.06	.19*	.37*	.42*	.29*
5 SSE Magic	.45*	0.12	0.09	.69*		.47*	.22*	.28*	.35*	.20*	.27*	.23*	.25*	0.07	.28*	.30*	.29*	.28*
6 Transliminality	.36*	0.12	.21*	.58*	.48*		.42*	.27*	.28*	.32*	.35*	0.06	.33*	0.14	.19*	.35*	.32*	.32*
7 Sight	.25*	0.12	0.09	.26*	.30*	.35*		.50*	.18*	.18*	.22*	0.1	.31*	0.04	0.05	.28*	.21*	0.14
8 Hearing	.26*	0.1	-0.02	.30*	.35*	.20*	.19*		.21*	.20*	.21*	0.06	.20*	0.07	-0.02	.32*	.24*	.18*
9 Touch	.25*	-0.07	-0.08	.26*	.30*	.21*	.30*	.22*		.46*	.41*	.21*	0.14	.26*	.18*	.23*	.21*	.32*
10 Taste	.23*	0.13	0.1	.30*	.25*	.25*	.23*	0.01	.30*		.69*	0.12	0.1	.16*	0.06	.22*	.26*	.28*
11 Smell	.29*	0.15	0.04	.46*	.38*	.32*	.31*	.19*	.41*	.55*		0.06	.24*	0.12	0.07	.23*	.31*	.26*
12 Prayer	0.17	.24*	.30*	0.09	.18*	0.12	0.09	0.11	.17*	0.1	0.09		.35*	.28*	.46*	.36*	.22*	.25*
13 Meditation Visualisation	.25*	0.11	0.14	.16*	0.15	0.14	.18*	0.06	.21*	.17*	0.11	.34*		.36*	.32*	.35*	.30*	.34*
14 Meditation Stillness	-0.16	-0.12	0.07	-0.04	0.03	0.01	-.16*	-0.01	0.02	-0.03	-0.09	.26*	.39*		.37*	.20*	0.1	.23*
15 Daily Rituals	.20*	.19*	.22*	.18*	.21*	0.14	0.07	0.07	0.09	0.1	0.04	.43*	.35*	.25*		.37*	.29*	.28*
16 Daily Day to Day Insight	.31*	.35*	.26*	.26*	.35*	.43*	.32*	.25*	.23*	.17*	.26*	.40*	.37*	0.11	.47*		.59*	.48*
17 Daily Dream Intrusions	.34*	.26*	.17*	.33*	.36*	.38*	.29*	.27*	0.13	.21*	.28*	.27*	.30*	0.04	.24*	.63*		.45*
18 Insight Scrutiny	.27*	.33*	.29*	.25*	.22*	.36*	.22*	.22*	0.14	0.15	.24*	.25*	.39*	0.09	.29*	.53*	.45*	
	S1																	

and are the topic of future work.

E-PSI (Element-PSI) App (Laythe & Roberts, 2023)

This Google Form based psi test is best characterized as a double-randomized card draw from four possible choices representing the four traditional elements (earth, air, fire, and water) elements across seven trials. The user selects their trial from a set of four trial options representing a set of four twelve-numbered series. Unlike other ESP tests, E-PSI contains questions about the participant's mood, environment, and focus both for the overall session and within each trial. These questions include the *specific location* where the test was conducted, as well as 4-point forced-choice Likert questions assessing *mood* (i.e., "*I am feeling anxious or stressed*" and "*I am feeling happy*") and *environmental distraction* (i.e., "*It is noisy or crowded where I am taking my test*" and "*I feel that I can concentrate*"). Further, during the test, participants are asked, "To what extent do you feel that your chosen answer is correct?" anchored on a 4-point forced-choice Likert scale (1 = *Not at all certain*, and 4 = *Very certain*). Second, participants are asked "How focused were you on selecting the correct element?" responded on a 7-point Likert scale anchored on (1 = *I had much difficulty focusing*, to 7 = *I was very focused*). We refer the reader to Laythe and Roberts (2023) for extensive details on this measure.

Procedure

As specified previously, participants were invited to voluntarily contribute to the survey as part of White's *Foundations Course*, an extensive multi-month class on the basic components and methods of magical practice. Participation occurred in two stages, noting that several steps were taken to ensure an unbiased response, and participants were informed by both White and the researchers that participation was entirely voluntary. The first stage involved participants completing an online survey containing the bulk of demographic and standardized measures. From this sample, participants were subsequently invited to participate in an online ESP test (see Measures, and Laythe & Roberts, 2023) where they took the test at a location of their choosing and a second time where participants were asked to use magic to influence the outcome of the ESP test (again at a location of their choosing). Thus, the analyses reported represent a two-stage data collection process: an initial voluntary survey, and subsequent two-stage ESP tests from the initial voluntary sample.

RESULTS

Correlational Analyses Across Two Samples

Pearson product-moment correlations assessed the relationships between scales, sensory and meditation items, and years spent practicing magic. Table 4 gives the full correlation matrix, which shows a generally positive

manifold of correlations among all variables. For both samples, transliminality was a strong and significant predictor of SSEg (r's = .58 to .61, p's < .01) and SSEr (r's = .47 to .48, p's < .01) scores. The approximate difference between anomalous experiences reported in general life versus during focused rituals was approximately .20. Secondarily, we see a significant association between years a magician has practiced and tranliminality scores (r's = .20 to .36, p's < .05), as well as with both SSEg and SSEr anomalous experiences (r's = .28 to .45, p's < .01). This affirms a systematic relationship between years of occult practice and greater degrees of transliminality, as well as greater degrees of reported anomalous experiences.

In terms of the types of sensory experience and the nature of paranormal experience in terms of perceived events being internal or imaginal versus external or perceived as factual in the environment, a positive manifold of correlations again exists, noting that translimiality was significantly associated with all five senses across both samples (r's = .20 to .35, p's < .05, with the majority being p's < .01) showing a small but significant tendency towards tranliminality facilitating more external perceptions across the five senses. Similarly, all five senses and the degree to which anomalous events were experienced as external (i.e., both SSEg and SSEr were similarly significantly associated (r's = .22 to .46, p's < .05, with the majority being p's < .01). As such, transliminality appears mildly, but significantly associated with both the degree to which magic practitioners experience anomalous phenomena externally through the five senses for both spontaneous or unexpected anomalies (SSEg) and focused and intentional ritual (SSEr).

Regarding meditative, insight, and mystical experiences, translimiality was significantly associated with day-to-day insight, dream intrusions, and self-examination of spirit or magical insights (r's = .32 to .43, p's < .01) and was associated with purposeful meditation visualizations (Western mediation style, r's .25 to .33, p's < .01), but not stillness or mindfulness (Eastern meditation style). Engaging in daily rituals as a function of transliminality were mildly significant (p's .19 to .20, p's < .05). An almost exact pattern was shown with the above-mentioned variables and their relationship to both SSEg and SSEr (r's = 22. to .39, p's < .05, with the majority being p's < .01). Similar to findings with translimiality, both daily rituals, and visualization meditation were mildly but positively predictive of both types of SSE scores (r's = .15 to .31, p's < .05, but noting a lack of replication across both samples between visualization meditation and SSE scores r = .15, n.s.). In essence, the above shows a relationship between transliminality and specific practices which endorse mediation and self-scrutiny regarding what are psychologi-cally interpreted as spiritual insights or spirit contact.

Finally, and somewhat uniquely compared to previous research with other paranormal experience groups (e.g., Laythe, 2019), paranormal beliefs measured as New Age Beliefs and Traditional Paranormal Beliefs generally did not predict the other variables, including both transliminality and the SSE (r's = .05 to .22, p's = n.s,), which, in bulk, were weak and did not replicate across samples. We think this finding might indicate issues with the wording of some or all the paranormal belief items, which was indeed identified as problematic by some participants. Logically speaking, paranormal belief is essentially a philosophical requirement if one is going to practice magic, so we address these relationships further in the discussion.

Multiple Regression Across Two Samples

As shown above, transliminality shows a significant association not only with the reporting of anomalous phenomena but also with the extent to which the five senses perceive these events as *internal* or subjective (within the person) as opposed to *external* (perceived as originating outside the individual). Thus, multiple linear regressions were run for both samples to predict SSE General and SSE Magic scores from TPB, NAP, transliminality, and sensory item scores (see Table 5).

Regarding general paranormal experience (SSEg), The overall linear regression models predicting SSE General scores from existing measures were significant (S1: $F(8, 123) = 11.127$, $p < .001$; S2: $F(8, 120) = 11.032$, $p < .001$) explaining between 42.0% (S1) and 42.4% (S2) of the variance in the endorsement of strange experiences in everyday life. For both samples, transliminality (S1: $t = 5.03$, $p < .001$; S2: $t = 5.80$, $p > .001$) and Hearing (S1: $t = 2.08$, $p = .040$; S2: $t = 2.97$, $p = .004$) were significant independent predictors, while Smell scores were only a significant predictor of SSE General scores for Sample 1 ($t = 2.82$, $p = .006$).

Concerning anomalous experiences during magical practice (SSEr), the overall linear regression models predicting SSE Magic scores from TPB, NAP, transliminality and sensory item scores were significant (S1: $F(8, 124) = 7.787$, $p < .001$; S2: $F(8, 110) = 5.073$, $p < .001$), explaining between 27.0% (S2) and 33.4% (S1) of the variance in SSE Magic scores. Transliminality was the only significant independent predictor of SSE Magic scores across both samples (S1: $t = 3.75$, $p < .001$; S2: $t = 3.46$, $p = .001$). Hearing was a significant predictor of SSE Magic scores in Sample 1 ($t = 2.74$, $p = .007$), while Touch was a significant predictor in Sample 2 ($t = 2.20$, $p = .030$).

Analysis aside, the simple regression model using all of the above variables and predicting SSEg shows that

Table 5. Multiple Regression of Sense Variables, Paranormal Belief, and Transliminality on SSE

SSE GENERAL	SAMPLE 1			SAMPLE 2		
	β	t	p	β	t	p
(Constant)		1.572	0.119		0.708	0.480
NewAgePhilosophy	0.112	1.313	0.192	-0.011	-0.111	0.912
Tradi. Paranormal Belief	-0.036	-0.415	0.679	0.022	0.226	0.821
Transliminality	**0.412**	5.026	0.000	**0.472**	5.802	0.000
Sight	-0.012	-0.149	0.882	-0.061	-0.671	0.503
Hearing	**0.152**	2.076	0.040	**0.250**	2.972	0.004
Touch	0.026	0.331	0.741	0.081	1.002	0.318
Taste	0.007	0.080	0.936	-0.071	-0.713	0.477
Smell	**0.265**	2.824	0.006	**0.176**	1.792	0.076
SSE MAGIC	β	t	p	β	t	p
(Constant)		1.095	0.276		0.226	0.822
NewAgePhilosophy	0.022	0.244	0.808	-0.130	-1.221	0.225
Tradi. Paranormal Belief	-0.035	-0.382	0.703	0.150	1.399	0.165
Transliminality	**0.326**	3.748	0.000	**0.334**	3.464	0.001
Sight	0.053	0.628	0.531	-0.061	-0.581	0.563
Hearing	**0.216**	2.737	0.007	0.155	1.516	0.132
Touch	0.093	1.108	0.270	**0.213**	2.196	0.030
Taste	0.096	1.060	0.291	-0.086	-0.717	0.475
Smell	0.101	1.015	0.312	0.084	0.699	0.486

whereas paranormal belief variables, when controlled for covariance, did not significantly predict SSEg scores, along with sight, touch, taste, and for one sample, smell, transliminality remains a significant and strong predictor (β = .41 to .47, p's < .01) of general paranormal experience (SSEg). Of the five senses, hearing was the only sense variable that significantly predicts SSEg (β = .15 to .25, p's < .05), suggesting that as hearing experience increases to the degree to which it is perceived as coming from external sources, paranormal experiences (to a small degree) increases.

Similarly, when examining the same model above while predicting paranormal experiences during ritual practice (SSEr), a nearly identical pattern emerges where tranliminality is the most robust predictor of paranormal experience (β = .32 to .33, p's < .01). However, with paranormal experience from ritual, none of the sense variables significantly replicated across both samples, with significant prediction occurring independently for hearing and touch in one sample only (See Table 5)

Magical Practice, Transliminality, and Psi Performance

For the following analyses we note the following changes from above. First, the following analyses represent a sub-set of the existing sample that further decided to participate in psi testing. As such, we note that sample size varies, and overall sample size prohibits the above random split sample analytical comparison method. We report sample size for all subsequent analyses. Second, we note that for actual significance testing of putative psi performance, we provide both parametric and non-parametric analyses for the analyses. We note here that overall skew and kurtosis for the psi samples were within normal ranges (< 1 in almost all cases), but Wilk's Shapiro tests of normality were significant. Given the somewhat surprising and significant findings, we thought it best to perform both types of analyses so that the reader can compare potential differences between parametric and non-parametric analysis, noting that any statistical test is simply a "best applied model" which fits to lesser ot greater extent to the actual data.

With regards to significance testing, we examined participants who performed the psi test without ritual and a subsequent represented measures group who attempted a magical ritual to purposefully influence their psi results. Results can be seen in Table 6, and we note for the reader that the psi-app has an expected score of 1.75/7 (i.e., 25%), and individual sample sizes can be seen in the Table.

Magical practitioners who performed the psi test 'normally' without any ritual showed highly significant psi-missing effects (x = 1.477, t = -2.82 p = .0058; Sign

Table 6. Parametric and Non-Parametric Tests of ESP Scoring for Both Samples and High and Low Transliminality

Sample			t-test			Wilcoxson	
	x	Expected	n	t	p	V	p
Open ESP, Whole Sample	1.477	1.75	107	**-2.82**	0.0058	1932	0.0026
Open ESP, High Tranliminality	1.435	1.75	23	<u>-1.79</u>	0.087	84	0.105
Open ESP, Low Transliminality	1.647	1.75	34	-0.51	0.614	247	0.384
Ritual ESP, Whole Sample	1.57	1.75	48	-1.41	0.165	447	0.209
Ritual ESP, High Transliminality	1.824	1.75	17	0.42	0.682	69	0.747
Ritual ESP, Low Transliminality	1.083	1.75	12	**-2.91**	0.014	10	0.021

test: V = 1932, p = .0026 – 17.6% difference). Comparing the psi performance of high versus low transliminals (via splitting the mean score), we found trending psi-missing for high transliminals (x = 1.435, t = -1.79 p = .087; Sign test: V = 84, p = .105 – 17.7 % difference). In contrast, low transliminals in the open psi condition showed an average hit rate which only trended towards psi-missing (x = 1.647, t = -0.51 p = .61; Sign test: V = 247, p = .384 -6% difference).

For magical practitioners using magic to influence their psi scoring, the overall sample was not significant for psi (x = 1.57, t = -1.41 p = .165; Sign test: V = 447, p = .21 -10% difference). Splitting the ritual for psi sample into high and low transliminality again per the method above, we find that high transliminals in ritual practice showed non-significant psi results (x = 1.824, t = -0.42 p = .682; Sign test: V = 69, p = .747 4.2% difference), but noting that compared to other group scoring, this group provides the highest average towards the expected hit rate of .25. Finally, low transliminals again showed significant psi-missing (x = 1.083, t = -2.91 p = .014; Sign test: V = 10, p = .021 -38.1% difference), noting again the lowest average of hitting (approximately 38% lower than the expected score) occurred with this group.

To examine these effects further, we computed individual correlations between self-reported confidence and focus scores during the psi test, transliminality and SSE general and ritual scoring, years magic was practiced, and our earlier daily practice variables. Table 7 gives the results, and individual sample sizes for these analyses are also reported there. In terms of the open psi sample who completed the test as normal results were general-

ly inversely related to psi scoring, noting two trends (focus during the test, r = .17, p =.08, and visual meditation practices, r = -.21, p =.11), and one significant relationship (insight through dreams, r = -.248, p =.05). In terms of the ritual sample, those who performed magic to alter their ESP scores, associations were generally positive, with only one significant predictor of psi scores (engaging in daily ritual, r = .42, p =.02).

Manipulation Checks

Finally, noting both significant correlations with ESP scoring, as well as significant trait and variable associations with the E-PSI app, we thought it worthwhile to perform some additional tests and checks in order to provide the reader with tests for more mundane explanations of these findings. We note here that the E-PSI app was vetted both before and after data collection in terms of ensuring that order switching of options was constant in order to ensure that choices were never presented in the same order for any Esp trial selection nor individual Esp trial. Similarly, an examination of the participants' data shows that all participants completed seven trials per session of the application. Further, examination of the participant's choices across potential trials is approximately equivalent in both conditions (Non-ritual trial df (27) χ^2 = 6.477, p =.99; Ritual trial df (27) χ^2 = 2.02, p =.83). However, we would note that participants themselves choose their individual trial randomly, and also select and perform each esp trial randomly. Thus, a non-equal selection of specific trials would represent the intuition or choice of the participant, and not a procedural issue with the ESP application.

Further, using ChatGPT Data Analyst, we were able to approximate a bootstrap function of the ESP application, using the exact same procedural method of the ESP app but substituting the random number function provided by ChatGPT for the participant. A subsequent random generated method of 1000 trials represented the computer randomly picking one of four trials, subsequently randomly picking a correct answer from the selected trial, and then repeating the former process seven times (see Appendix for Chat GPT instructions used). This process produced a bootstrapped mean of 1.696, which was not significantly different from the expected mean value of 1.75 with high power provided by the hypothetical sample size (df (999), t = -1.55, p =.12). Finally, we did not test for order effects, as our magician sample only completed two tests, and at varying times and locations of their choice. As such, time gaps between these tests would intuitively preclude test fatigue and, of course, the fact that the test only takes approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Table 7. Correlations of Traits, Magical Exercise Variables, and ESP Confidence and Focus with ESP Scoring

	ESP Scores With Ritual			ESP Scores Open Trial		
	r	*p*	*n*	*r*	*p*	*n*
Confidence	-0.17	0.26	47	0.07	0.472	107
Focus	-0.07	0.64	47	**0.17**	**0.08**	**170**
Transliminality	0.16	0.37	31	-0.173	0.17	63
SSE General	0.17	0.36	30	-0.283	0.035	56
SSE Ritual	0.04	0.84	28	-0.17	0.2	58
Years Practicing	-0.04	0.87	19	-0.16	0.28	47
Prayer	0.081	0.66	31	-0.14	0.27	63
Vis Meditation	0.172	0.36	31	**-0.21**	**0.11**	**63**
Eastern Mediation	-0.21	0.26	31	-0.138	0.28	63
Daily Rituals	**0.42**	**0.02**	**31**	-0.179	0.16	63
Daily Inspirations	0.26	0.158	31	-0.128	0.31	63
Dreams	0.09	0.61	31	**-0.248**	**0.05**	**63**
Introspection	-0.1	0.595	31	-0.096	0.46	62

DISCUSSION

We assert that this preliminary but unprecedented study of devoted magic practitioners yielded highly congruent findings with transliminality, anomalous experiences, and their interaction with the psychological or mystical role of magical practice. Indeed, the results both broadly and specifically seem to confirm our hypothesis that ritual magicians are essentially "trained transliminals." Specifically, three key findings emerged that we discuss in detail in the subsections below:

a) Magical practitioners clearly engage in specific practices irrespective of differences in ideological adherence to specific traditions, deities, or spirits. These practices, as assessed by our seven practice items, are, in fact, mildly related in a positive manifold to transliminality, as well as both general and ritual SSE anomalous experiences.

b) Magical practitioners profile as high transliminals, and the relationships between transliminality and anomalous experiences in this cohort are more robust than compared to published benchmarks for a general "haunting" experience. Moreover, magicians' transliminality levels significantly predict both their sensory experiences of anomalous phenomena and daily practice methods.

c) As an initial claim, associations between introspection and critical thinking about mental images and meditation collectively support our HP-S (i.e., transliminal dis-ease) model in the sense that these practices significantly relate to transliminality scores and anomalous experiences with this magician sample. Thus, given the lifestyle of magic that the current sample endorses, initial evidence suggests that mental techniques are used by magicians both in ritual and practice to manage, engage with, or control mental or "spirit" intrusions, which are typically reported as intrusive and non-controllable in haunt experience populations.

Magical Practiced Skills and Transliminality

Describing magic practitioners as "trained transliminals" should follow evidence of the foundational mental exercises that characterize their ritual practices. Our initial foray into understanding these practices appears very promising. To be sure, our analyses reveal a positive associative triad, where transliminality predicts both anomalous experiences (per the SSE) and routine magical prac-

tices and vice versa. Notably, Western-style meditation (i.e., guided imagery), daily ritual, day-to-day insights, and perhaps more importantly, self-examination of spiritual and magical insights all mildly but reliably predicted transliminality scores and both anomalous phenomena experienced daily, as well as within the context of purposeful, invoked practices or rituals. Indeed, even years of practice predicted transliminality across both samples, albeit with somewhat small effect sizes. Of course, these results offer no insights into which of these variables are triggers in terms of temporal sequence or psychosocial development. However, we underscore that transliminality was a robust predictor of anomalous experiences as measured by the SSE accounting for approximately 10 to 16 % of SSE scores, while the bulk of internal/external experience across the five senses did not significantly predict SSE scores (with one or two exceptions, see Results). Based on previous research on haunters (e.g., Ventola et al., 2019; Laythe et al., 2022), we interpret these trends to mean that transliminality is a foundational mediating variable to anomalous experiences (induced or spontaneous), with subsequent beliefs or practices moderating these anomalous experiences.

Building on this interpretation, the positive relationship between these practices and transliminality, as opposed to a dampening effect, suggests that magicians have learned to "lean into" the myriad of images, thoughts, impulses, and general sensory information facilitated by their thin mental boundary structures. Thus, we posit from the data and the authors' personal experiences that attempting to stifle or ignore these internal impulses and external intrusions is likely not the best method for managing the positive or negative impacts of transliminality. Rather, openly engaging with the "flood" of affect, imagery, ideation, and perception with cognitive-behavioral methods to distance oneself and thereby control or cope with the mental stimulation while simultaneously interpreting it appears to be a benefit to the practice of magic.

Although we did not assess our participants' mental health histories or current status, there are broader comparisons that support our conclusions and interpretations. First, the stable and positive relationship between years of magic practice and the various high-strangeness variables is telling. Previous work examining trans liminality and paranormal belief in an HP-S context clearly supports that anomalous experiences can be very frightening and unsettling and in the case of case studies that persist over time (e.g., Houran & Laythe, 2021; Laythe et al., 2022), these events are linked to dis-ease states. In contrast, ritual magicians purposefully seek anomalous experiences; in fact, many of our participants have

engaged with such phenomena for over five years. The comparison is obvious, "haunters" typically become distressed and want the anomalies to cease, whereas ritual magicians desire these same anomalies and thus use mental exercises in the guise of spiritual practices to deliberately facilitate them for personal benefits. The sense of control generated by these spiritual exercises over said phenomena assists the magician in what we might propose as "transliminal mental intrusions" aiding the magician to find benefit in a spiritual and paranormal practice. In essence, the difference between the *transliminal haunter* and the *transliminal magician* is the mental practices that give magicians a sense of control over anomalous phenomena *regardless of their psychological or parapsychological nature*.

Accordingly, a clinical psychology view might suggest that the generic methods of magical practice would possibly help to relieve the "dis-ease" generated by persistent haunt-type episodes (i.e…, ostensible cases of HP-S). However, to examine this possibility, future studies would need to first give participants (both haunters and magicians) reliable mental health and wellness measures to examine potential differences, and subsequently design a program to apply these techniques to haunter participants to see if dis-ease decreases. Likewise, we are optimistic about the application of these intervention strategies and note anecdotally that some of the present authors have non-professionally advised individuals with ostensible HP-S to engage in specific meditation or visualization exercises, and generally, these percipients have reported improved mental health and less stress while continuing to practice them.

However, astute readers may recall that our explanation here of mental imagery, focus, and introspection as methods for manipulating and controlling transliminality and paranormal experience is in stark contrast to older work in seances (e.g., Batcheldor 1966; Batcheldor, 1984; Owen & Sparrow, 1976). Notably, Batchledor (1984) suggests that 'witness inhibition', 'belief over doubt', and 'ownership resistance' from participants are known to inhibit a séance and subsequent production of the phenomena. All of the above would suggest that the focus or introspection of participants in facilitating a paranormal event (i.e., magical ritual) would be inhibited by the overt focus of the participant.

Our response to this is that both may be the case, depending on *who* is involved in the magical process. One of the core differences in the present sample versus previous séance work (e.g., Batchledor, 1984; Owen & Sparrow, 1976; Laythe et al., 2017) represents the difference in comfortability with anomalous phenomena, and more obviously, confidence and a sense of control as a func-

tion of repeated exposure to high-strangeness, as well as belief and faith in mechanisms meant to control the phenomena. In essence, magical practitioners see anomalous phenomena as 'not at all irregular', while college students with significantly less experience both intellectually and practically with anomalous phenomena would be naturally hesitant, akin to learning not to flinch when a baseball is thrown at you when batting. A second factor that might explain a difference in these methods is that Batchledor's (1984) concept of 'ownership resistance' infers that the participant is using internally based PK to produce the phenomena (inferring the phenomena is *neither* purely external nor an independent agent in terms of belief). Perhaps somewhat obviously, Magicians, in bulk, believe in the external agency of discarnate spirits. As such, the production of phenomena is not a function of the magician but the summoned spirit, alleviating the possibility of 'ownership resistance' via the belief that the phenomena produced are not due to them.

To be clear, the current work does not suggest that Batchledor's (1984) guidelines are incorrect. Indeed, for college students and laypeople interested in these kinds of practices, Batcheldor's guidelines may be correct. However, magicians represent a much more experienced and trained population. Previous work (e.g., Laythe et al., 2022) shows that participants', traits, beliefs, and environment all significantly contribute to the presence of paranormal phenomena. As such, it seems a reasonable hypothesis of creating the 'ideal zone' of paranormal experience is not constant and may represent different contextual and internal variables based on the constituency of the people engaging in 'paranormal acts'.

Turning to transliminality and our measures of sensory experiences, we see an interesting pattern. The degree to which magic practitioners perceive their anomalous experiences as "internal and subjective" versus "external and objective" is significantly related to thin boundary functioning, with an approximate 5 to 10% shift towards externalization (depending on the specific sensory mode) in accordance with higher transliminality scores. To our knowledge, this type of effect has no precedent in the empirical literature so it is unclear whether it generalizes to other forms of "psychic" practitioners like remote viewers, mediums, healers, or even haunters. We do not aim to strictly "pathologize" high translminals, but clinically speaking it does make sense that greater degrees of externalized perceptions would be associated with thinner mental boundaries, given the literature consistently linking transliminality to dissociative and schizotypal-related states (e.g., Escolà-Gascón 2020a, 2020b, Evans et al., 2019; Dagnall et al., 2010, 2022a, 2022b). Thus, this pattern might define transliminal experiences in ritual

magic settings as a form of induced dissociation or psychosis. However, we think this is a premature idea and instead suggest that the magician's condition as a "trained transliminal" provides a set of structures and controls by which the extreme or negative effects of high transliminality are essentially managed, if not prevented.

This assertion has some empirical grounding. For example, the mental practices of the magicians showed a positive relationship with introspection and evaluation of intrusive mental material, as well as greater degrees of transliminality with both the number of years a person has been practicing magic as well as visualization skills. We further suggest that visualization and, more importantly, critical evaluation and introspection of the mental states experienced by the magicians are part of the management skills which help transliminality to work for the practitioner rather than being dominated by its effects.

Magical Practice, Magical Ritual, and ESP

Psi researchers do not often have the opportunity to write this, but the outcomes on our psi tests with magicians both within 'everyday' and 'ritual' contexts showed shifts from the expected chance means of 4 to 38%, with both larger and smaller samples. While these results are significant, the twist is that they represented psi-missing as opposed to psi-hitting. Findings with ESP are complex in this case, noting that when asked to complete an ESP trial without preparation, the overall sample, and those with high transliminality show the greatest degree of statistically below chance scoring. In contrast, when ritual is applied towards ESP, the results invert, showing low transliminals show a highly below chance score on ESP tests. In essence, the entire trend of the analysis was a powerful trend towards psi-missing, but differed in terms of scoring as a function of the use of ritual or not. One obvious conclusion is that adding a ritual to the ESP trial definitively changed how performance on ESP tasks occurred. Of course, this raises the questions of why significant effects and why they occurred opposite the expectations one might have for seemingly "exceptional subjects" for experimental psi. There are several issues to consider on this point.

For instance, under a mechanistic or materialist model, there should be no significant effects of any kind either with a standalone guessing psi test or any of our individual differences, magical practice variables, or the use of ritual. However, our findings clearly suggest that systematic variables influenced the ritual magicians' performance on the random selection task. That said, an obvious and mundane explanation would be an artifact with the application itself, although several reasons cause us to reject this hypothesis. Earlier validation work (Laythe & Roberts, 2023) and subsequent field research (Lange et al., 2023) with this same test showed select albeit less powerful and in sometimes non-significant positive outcomes. This indicates that the E-PSI app can yield above-chance results (i.e., psi-hitting). Also, several individual participants in this study obtained hit rates of five out of eight, showing that scores above the expected two hits were certainly possible and confirmed. As such, the available evidence and our post-hoc tests of the ESP application (see Results) does not suggest an error in the technology.

Further, there were magical practice variables that showed trends towards psi performance (i.e., degree of focus during the test and visualization skills used on a regular basis), as well as significant magical practice variable predictors (i.e., dreams and daily rituals). And yet, these same variables coincided with psi-missing. These patterns are perhaps unsurprising. Although the direction of the effect was counterintuitive, Laythe and Roberts (2023) showed that attentional focus and related variables significantly contributed to the variance in a positive direction with psi scores from this application. A few significant psi scores (hitting or missing) could result from chance or error, but this explanation becomes increasingly complicated or infeasible when traits and practices that are proximally distal from the actual psi task nonetheless significantly predicted psi scores in the same direction as the findings. In other words, we again see an interplay of transliminality, the practice of magical mental skill-sets, and psi scoring. Hence, our dataset preliminarily validates magical practice as a producer of genuinely anomalous effects as measured by a controlled testing procedure.

So, why did the magicians score in the direction opposite to both their intent and traditional psi test expectations? One obvious explanation is a general dislike for a smartphone-based psi test, which markedly differs in setting and action from the traditional environment and cues and outcome expectations inherent to ritual environments. As we have stated in previous work (Laythe et al., 2018, 2021, 2022), anomalous experiences involve the right person in the right environment, and we note here that the enchantment (Drinkwater et al., 2022; Houran, Lange, & Laythe, 2022; Lange & Houran, 2021) created by prayers, invocations, and rituals produce different "environmental vibes and psychological moods" compared to the more cognitive and tech-based process on a smartphone screen. As such, we might posit that the method of psi testing did not fit well with the ritual conditioning or simple aesthetic preferences of a "magically-minded"

sample. Simply stated, participants may have reacted negatively (consciously or unconsciously) to our method of psi testing. From occult traditions, most esotericists (and psychologist esotericists) such as Israel Regardie, who was partly responsible for popularizing Western magical methods to the public, agree that some parts of magic work in the unconscious rather than the conscious mind (Regardie, 1995a, 1995b). Thus, the psi-missing observed here might have represented a conscious willingness to influence psi in a positive direction, although the unconscious (typically deemed much more powerful with magical acts) inherently disliked the technological approach. However, this is purely speculative, and resolving the question would involve enlisting the help of magicians who are willing to repeat the process used here with various "enchantment friendly" and "enchantment unfriendly" methods of measuring putative psi performance.

On the other hand, allowing for the possibility of discarnate agency as magicians routinely invoke various spirits and entities to elicit certain outcomes, one could posit that our psi-missing findings are a "Trickster effect" (i.e., Hanson, 2001; Kennedy, 2024; Storm, 2023). From this perspective, the magicians wanted psi-positive scores, but the attitude of the attending "spirits" towards the psi test was not aligned, so the result was significant, but there were opposite effects. This is a highly culturally laden interpretation of our findings, but we should note that Trickster effects are well-known and documented in the domain of magical practices, notably when using spirit entities to perform magic. Whether one engages with the belief system or prefers a more anthropological approach, many grimoires that deal with the assistance of troublesome entities (i.e., demons) conspicuously include large amounts of protections, threats, and words of power to gain the obedience of such agents. Factually, the entire grimoire tradition might be summarized as "getting unruly or dangerous spirits to do what you require without any horrible side effects that can psychologically (and perhaps physically) scar you for life."

Regardless of the explanation, the magicians' overall psi performance independent of and as a function of rituals shifts their performance on ESP. Future research should nevertheless strive to replicate our findings and resolve their meaning. In the interim, the present data unquestionably support the ideas that practicing magicians can perform outside of chance expectations on a controlled test of putative psi, and by proxy, this ability is seemingly facilitated by their daily mental practices, focus, and transliminality levels.

Limitations and Caveats

Although we used a split-sample design to show that the relationships between these variables replicate, we were unable to use this method for the psi tests. Consequently, we do not deem our approach or data either to be comprehensive or conclusive. We also note that the magicians provided a wide variety of information about their various belief systems, methods, and affiliations, which we are precluded from analyzing in this paper due to space constraints. Given that we found specific techniques of magic were significantly related to scores on transliminality, anomalous experiences (per the SSE), and tests of putative psi, it is not too large a leap to suggest that certain ritual methods used by certain magical groups and cultures might work better than others. Unfortunately, pursuing this intriguing possibility requires additional methods and an entirely different and structured set of analyses that is beyond the scope of this paper. However, we hope to engage with these spiritual and cultural aspects of magic in future research. To the above, additional research past our initial exploratory map of magical practice may benefit from detailed analysis where factor analysis, or Rasch scaling (Bond & Fox, 2015) are employed to look at item and sub-scale overlaps, in conjunction with differences in types of practice, which may remove some false trails and error variance likely present in the current work.

We would again emphasize that the current paper is not by any stretch 'historically comprehensive'. From above, there may be benefits to a deep historical examination of cultural magical lineage to define nuances in magical practice. However, we do not believe that this type of examination would negate the broader claim which our data supports here. Notably, that there are common mental and daily practices which appear as significant predictors of transliminality, ESP scoring, and paranormal experience, which occur across a wide domain of pantheons and magical practices represented in the sample we examined.

To use a relaxed analogy, magic appears to represent a structure similar to martial arts training. Of course, there are myriad techniques, 'styles', and discrete historical lineage in martial arts, many of which at first glance appear very different in appearance from each other. Yet, there is much more commonality behind the surface, as all styles have mandatory techniques for body and strength development, mental focus, and breathing towards the practice of the martial art. Of course, more obviously, a fist to the throat versus a stylized straight handed chop to the throat are both strikes to the throat designed to disable the individual. Our initial evidence here supports the above analogy with magic; the stylized method may look very different to the unfamiliar, but the underlying

techniques and goals appear the same.

From a sociocultural perspective, our initial findings might suggest that cultural distinctions in magic from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), Marx's (1972), or Durkheim's (Pickering, 2009) perspective may represent purely cultural delineations of 'us' versus 'them', or at least these divisions of magic occur as a function of traditional beliefs inherent in the specific magical practice, but notably, and using the current work, these divisions do not appear to be a function of the 'meta-method' within magical practice. For example, a cursory examination of prayer in Catholic or Protestant religions show a definitive procedure by which one asks God for help or a beneficial outcome. Examination of the procedure of both show that the root practices both within magical communities, and in contrast to exoteric religions, are both similar and formulaic. Indeed, the issue of religion and magic becomes more complex as most western grimoires invoke the same Judeo-Christian God as the source of the magician's power (Mathers, 1975, for an example). As such, finding clear and empirically methodological distinctions between exoteric and esoteric practice will remain difficult until extensive research and nuanced cultural distinctions are examined in contrast to commonalities of procedure.

Finally, and related to the above, paranormal belief, results did not mirror previous work (i.e. Ventola et al., 2019) in the sense that PB in both of its factors was not significantly related to either transliminality or paranormal experience (i.e., the SSE). We believe this erratic response to the PB measure is a result of this particular sample disliking the wording (and perhaps the concept itself) of paranormal belief. Given current cultural norms, and the age of the original Tobacyck (1989/2004) measure, we do not find this surprising. While noting that Rasch scaling provides excellent psychometric properties for the revised PB scale (i.e. Lange et al., 2000), we would note that there are strong protestant Christian undercurrents within both sub-scales of this measure. This is particularly true with items within traditional paranormal belief, which ask if a participant believes in a devil, or Heaven or Hell. One does not have to make much of a leap to see that these items secure paranormal belief only within a Judeo-Christian framework. As such, we do not find it surprising that the current sample, with diverse and overlapping beliefs in non-Christian ideologies and belief systems, found difficulty in engaging with these items. We might humbly argue that a more ideologically neutral paranormal belief measure may serve these types of participants more fully.

Implications and Applications

To our knowledge, this paper offers an unparalleled analysis of practicing occultists/ritual magicians to better understand the nature and efficacy of this oft-ignored practice. This group comprises a seemingly "perfect sample" to examine whether specific conditions, training, or individual differences reliably facilitate psi-type outcomes. Our preliminary research ultimately suggests that magicians are high transliminals, which helps to explain their reports of anomalous experiences within and outside of ritual contexts, as well as their beyond-chance performance on a computerized test of putative psi. However, scientists and magicians alike might ask what to do with these findings. Our response is that whether a skeptical scientist or a believing magician, the methods and analyses presented here, in the least, show that practice, focus, and transliminality do, in fact, "matter" with spontaneous anomalous experiences and psi in experimental settings.

We hope this exploratory work serves as a valuable proof-of-concept to the magic community that science can be applied to the study of ritual outcomes and likewise potentially guide practitioners towards beneficial attitudes, habits, and outcomes in this context. For scientists interested in anomalous phenomena in both the field and laboratory settings, we would contend that our findings show that the methods employed by magicians might apply equally to other mystically- or psychic-oriented groups to facilitate psi performance or anomalous experiences by focusing on the exceptional subject's traits, practices, and general congruence with the immediate environment.

REFERENCES

Altemeyer, B., & Hunsberger, B. (1992). Authoritarianism, religious fundamentalism, quest, and prejudice. *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 2(2), 113-133. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327582ijpr0202_5

Alvarado, C. S. (1998). ESP and altered states of consciousness: An overview of conceptual and research trends. *The Journal of Parapsychology*, 62(1), 27 - 63.

Anderson, J. G., Suchicital, L., Lang, M., Kukic, A., Mangione, L., Swengros, D., ... Friesen, M. A. (2015). The effects of healing touch on pain, nausea, and anxiety following bariatric surgery: A pilot study. *EXPLORE*, 11(3), 208-216. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.explore.2015.02.006

Aron, E. N., & Aron, A. (1997). Sensory-processing sensitivity and its relation to introversion and emotionality. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 73(2), 345-368. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.73.2.345

Bailey, M. D. (2006). The meanings of magic. *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, *1*(1), 1-23. https://doi.org/10.1353/mrw.0.0052

Batcheldor, K. (1966). Report of a case of table levitation and associated phenomena. *Journal for the Society for Psychical Research*, 43, 339-356.

Batcheldor, K. (1984). Contributions to the theory of pk induction from sitter-group work. *Journal of American Society for Psychical Research*, 78, 105-122.

Beischel, J., & Schwartz, G. E. (2007). Anomalous information reception by research mediums demonstrated using a novel triple-blind protocol. *Explore*, 3(1), 23-27. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.explore.2006.10.004

Beischel, J., Boccuzzi, M., Biuso, M., & Rock, A. J. (2015). Anomalous information reception by research mediums under blinded conditions II: Replication and extension. *Explore*, 11(2), 136-142. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.explore.2015.01.001

Bengston, W., & Nies, M. (2023). A double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial on hospitalized COVID patients using informed water. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 37(1), 36-41. https://doi.org/10.31275/20232837

Bengston, W. F., & Krinsley, D. (2000). The effect of the "laying on of hands" on transplanted breast cancer in mice. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 14(3), 353-364.

Blavatsky, H. P. (2016). *The Secret Doctrine*. Penguin.

Bond, T., & Fox, C. M. (2015). *Applying the Rasch model: Fundamental measurement in the human sciences* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Caputo, G. B. (2010). Apparitional experiences of new faces and dissociation of self-identity during mirror gazing. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 110(3_suppl), 1125-1138. https://doi.org/10.2466/pms.110.C.1125-1138

Caputo, G. B. (2013). Archetypal-imaging and mirror-gazing. *Behavioral Sciences*, 4(1), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs4010001

Caputo, G. B. (2021). Split-mirror gazing increases dissociative states and illusions of self-identity. *Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, 22(3), 394-405. https://doi.org/10.1080/15299732.2020.1869642

Dagnall, N., Munley, G., Parker, A., & Drinkwater, K. (2010). Paranormal belief, schizotypy, and transliminality. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 74(1), 117.

Dagnall, N., Denovan, A., & Drinkwater, K. G. (2022a). Variations in well-being as a function of paranormal belief and psychopathological symptoms: A latent profile analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, Article 886369. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.886369

Dagnall, N., Denovan, A., Drinkwater, K. G., & Escolà-Gascón, Á. (2022b). Paranormal belief and well-being: The moderating roles of transliminality and psy-chopathology-related facets. Frontiers in Psychology, 13, Article 915860. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.915860

Derome, M., Fonseca-Pedrero, E., Caputo, G. B., & Debbané, M. (2022). A developmental study of mirror-gazing-induced anomalous self-experiences and self-reported schizotypy from 7 to 28 years of age. *Psychopathology*, 55(1), 49-61.

Drinkwater, K., Massullo, B., Dagnall, N., Laythe, B., Boone, J., & Houran, J. (2022). Understanding consumer enchantment via paranormal tourism: Part I—Conceptual review. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 63(2), 195-215. https://doi.org/10.1177/1938965520967920

Escolà-Gascón, Á. (2020a). Researching unexplained phenomena: Empirical-statistical validity and reliability of the multivariable multiaxial suggestibility inventory-2 (MMSI-2). Heliyon, 6(7) Article e04291. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e04291

Escolà-Gascón, Á. (2020b). Researching unexplained phenomena II: New evidences for anomalous experiences supported by the multivariable multiaxial suggestibility inventory-2 (MMSI-2). *Current Research in Behavioral Sciences, 1*, Article 100005. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crbeha.2020.100005

Evans, J., Lange, R., Houran, J., & Lynn, S. J. (2019). Further psychometric exploration of the transliminality construct. *Psychology of Consciousness: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 6(4), 417-438. https://doi.org/10.1037/cns0000163

Fortune, D., & Knight, G. (1997). *An introduction to ritual magic*. Thoth.

Godsen, C. (2020). *Magic: A history from alchemy to witchcraft, from the Ice Age to the present*. Picador.

Gonzalez-Whippler (1989). *Santeria, the religion*. Llewellyn Publications.

Gómez, Á., Brooks, M. L., Buhrmester, M. D., Vázquez, A., Jetten, J., & Swann Jr, W. B. (2011). On the nature of identity fusion: Insights into the construct and a new measure. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 100(5), 918-933. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0022642

Gómez, Á., Dovidio, J. F., Gaertner, S. L., Fernández, S., & Vázquez, A. (2013). Responses to endorsement of commonality by ingroup and outgroup members: The roles of group representation and threat. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 39(4), 419-431. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167213475366

Gómez, Á., Dovidio, J. F., Huici, C., Gaertner, S. L., & Cuadrado, I. (2008). The other side of we: When outgroup members express common identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 34(12), 1613-1626. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167208323600

Greven, C. U., Lionetti, F., Booth, C., Aron, E. N., Fox, E.,

Schendan, H. E., Pluess, M., Bruining, H., Acevedo, B., Bijttebier, P., & Homberg, J. (2019). Sensory processing sensitivity in the context of environmental sensitivity: A critical review and development of research agenda. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 98, 287-305. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2019.01.009

Gruzelier, J. H. (2002). A review of the impact of hypnosis, relaxation, guided imagery and individual differences on aspects of immunity and health. *Stress*, 5(2), 147-163. https://doi.org/10.1080/10253890290027877

Hanegraaff, W. J. (2009). Better than magic: Cornelius Agrippa and Lazzarellian hermetism. *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 4(1), 1-25. https://doi.org/10.1353/mrw.0.0128

Hansen, G. P. (2001). *The trickster and the paranormal*. Xilbris.

Hartmann, E. (1991). *Boundaries in the mind: A new psychology of personality*. New York: Basic Books.

Hilbert, R. A. (2009). Ethnomethodology and social theory. In Turner, Bryan S. (Ed.), *The New Blackwell Companion to Social Theory* (pp. 159-178). Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444304992.ch8

Houran, J. (2002). Analysis of haunt experiences at a historical Illinois landmark. *Australian Journal of Parapsychology*, 2, 97-124.

Houran, J., Ashe, D. D., & Thalbourne, M. A. (2003). Encounter experiences in the context of mental boundaries and bilaterality. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 67, 260-280.

Houran, J., Little, C., Laythe, B., & Ritson, D. W. (2022). Uncharted features and dynamics of the South Shields Poltergeist. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 86, 129-164.

Houran, J., Lange, R., & Laythe, B. (2022). Understanding consumer enchantment via paranormal tourism: Part II—Preliminary Rasch validation. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 63(2), 216-230. https://doi.org/10.1177/1938965520971276

Houran, J., & Laythe, B. (2022). Case study of recognition patterns in haunted people syndrome. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, Article 879163. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.879163

Houran, J., & Lange, R. (2012). 'I Ching' outcomes from experimental manipulations of transliminality and paranormal belief. *Australian Journal of Parapsychology*, 12(1), 39-58.

Houran, J., Lange, R., Laythe, B., Dagnall, N., & Drinkwater, K., & O'Keefe, C. (2019b). Quantifying the phenomenology of ghostly episodes – Part II: A Rasch model of spontaneous accounts. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 83,

170-194. https://doi.org/10.30891/jopar.2019.01.03

Houran, J., Laythe, B., O'Keefe, C., Dagnall, N., Drinkwater, K., & Lange, R. (2019a). Quantifying the phenomenology of ghostly episodes – Part I: Need for a standard operationalization. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 83, 25-46. https://doi.org/10.30891/jopar.2019.01.03

Houran, J., Thalbourne, M. A., & Hartmann, E. (2003). Comparison of two alternative measures of the boundary construct. *Psychological Reports*, 96, 311-323. https://doi.org/10.2466/pms.2003.96.1.311

Houran, J., Hughes, L. F., Thalbourne, M. A., & Delin, P. S. (2006). Technical paper no. 12: quasi-experimental study of transliminality, vibrotactile thresholds, and performance speed. *Australian Journal of Parapsychology*, 6(1), 54-80.

Iamblichus, Prophyry, & Taylor, T. (2012). *Iamblichus on the mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511978203

Jung, C. G., Shamdasani, S. E., Kyburz, M. T., & Peck, J. T. (2009). *The red book: Liber novus*. WW Norton & Co.

Jung, C. G. (1968). *Man and his symbols*. Dell.

Jawer, M. A., & Micozzi, M. S. (2009). *The spiritual anatomy of emotion: How feelings link the brain, the body, and the sixth sense*. Rochester, VT: Park St Press.

Kazak, A. E. (2018). Journal article reporting standards [editorial]. *American Psychologist*, 73, 1–2. https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000263 https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000263

Kennedy, J. E. (2024). Coming to terms with the psi-trickster. *Journal for Scientific Exploration*, 38, 110-121. https://doi.org/10.31275/20242755

Kieckhefer, R. (2006). Mythologies of witchcraft in the fifteenth century. *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 1(1), 79-108. https://doi.org/10.1353/mrw.0.0080

Kumar, V. K., & Pekala, R. J. (2001). Relation of hypnosis-related attitudes and behaviors to paranormal belief and experience: A technical review. In J. Houran & R. Lange (Eds.), *Hauntings and poltergeists: Multidisciplinary perspectives* (pp. 260-279). Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.

Lange, R., Houran, J., Evans, J, & Lynn, S. J. (2018). A review and re-evaluation of the Revised Transliminality Scale. *Psychology of Consciousness: Theory, Research, and Practice*. 6, 67-89. https://doi.org/10.1037/cns0000153

Lange, R., Irwin, H. J., & Houran, J. (2000). Top-down purification of Tobacyk's Revised Paranormal Belief Scale. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 29, 131-156.

Lange, R., Ross, R. M., Dagnall, N., Irwin, H. J., Houran, J., & Drinkwater, K. (2019). Anomalous experiences and paranormal attributions: Psychometric challenges in

studying their measurement and relationship. *Psychology of Consciousness: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 6, 346-358. https://doi.org/10.1037/cns0000187

Lange, R., & Houran, J. (2021). Replicable survey evidence for an 'Enchantment--Psi' loop. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 53(2) 140- 156.

Lange, R., Laythe, B., & Houran, J. (2023). Preregistered field test of an 'enchantment-psi' loop. *Journal of Parapsychology*, 87, 11-34. http://doi.org/10.30891/jopar.2023.01.03

Lange, R., Thalbourne, M. A., Houran, J., & Storm, L. (2000). The Revised Transliminality Scale: Reliability and validity data from a Rasch top-down purification procedure. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 9, 591-617. https://doi.org/10.1006/ccog.2000.0472

Lange, R., & Houran, J. (2013). Towards a replicable formula for significant 'I Ching' outcomes. *Australian Journal of Parapsychology*, 13(1), 9-25.

Lange, R., Houran, J., Sheridan, L., Dagnall, N., Drinkwater, K., O'Keeffe, C., & Laythe, B. (2020). Haunted people syndrome revisited: Empirical parallels between subjective paranormal episodes and putative accounts of group-stalking. *Mental Health, Religion, & Culture*, 23, 532-549. https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2020.1767552

Laythe, B., Houran, J., Dagnall, N., & Drinkwater, K. (2021). Conceptual and clinical implications of a "haunted people syndrome." *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*, 8, 195–214.

Laythe, B., Houran, J., Dagnall, N., Drinkwater, K., & O'Keeffe (2022). *Ghosted!: Exploring the haunting reality of paranormal encounters*. McFarland.

Laythe, B., & Houran, J. (2022). Adversarial collaboration on a Drake-S equation for the survival question. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 36(1), 130-160. https://doi.org/10.31275/20222357

Laythe, B., Houran, J., & Little, C. (2021). The ghostly character of childhood imaginary companions: An empirical study of online accounts. *The Journal of Parapsychology*, 85(1), 54-74. https://doi.org/10.30891/jopar.2021.01.07

Laythe, B., Laythe C., & Woodward, L. (2017). A test of an occult-themed séance: Examining anomalous events, psychosomatic symptoms, transliminality, and electromagnetic fields. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 31, 572-624.

Laythe, B. R., & Roberts, N. (2023). A Four Element-Themed Self-Selecting Mobile Application for ESP Testing. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 36(4), 682-691. https://doi.org/10.31275/20222789

Levenson, H. (1973). Reliability and validity of the I, P, and C scales-A multidimensional view of locus of control.

Paper presented at American Psychological Association Convention, Montreal, Canada, August. https://doi.org/10.1037/t04693-000

Levenson, H., & Mahler, I. (1975). Attitudes toward others and components of internal-external locus of control. *Psychological Reports*, 36(1), 209-210. https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1975.36.1.209

Levenson, H., & Miller, J. (1976). Multidimensional locus of control in sociopolitical activists of conservative and liberal ideologies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 33(2), 199-208. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.33.2.199

Little, C., Laythe, B., & Houran, J. (2021). Quali-quantitative comparison of childhood imaginary companions and ghostly episodes. *The Journal of Parapsychology*, 85, 1-30. https://doi.org/10.30891/jopar.2021.01.07

Marathakis, I. (2017). *The magical treatise of Solomon or Hygroanteia: The true ancestor to the Key of Solomon*. Golden Horde Publishing.

Marks, S. R. (1974). Durkheim's theory of anomie. *American Journal of Sociology*, 80(2), 329-363. https://doi.org/10.1086/225803

Marx, K. (1972). *The Marx-Engels reader* (Vol. 4). Norton.

Mayer, G. (2009). Magicians of the 21st Century. An Attempt at Dimensioning the Magician's Personality. *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 4(2), 176-206. https://doi.org/10.1353/mrw.0.0150

Mathers, S. L. G. (1975). *The book of the sacred magic of Abramelin the Mage*. Dover.

Mathers, S. L. G. (1995). *The Goetia: The Lesser Key of Solomon the King*. Wieser.

Mathers, S. L. M. (1971). *Astral projection, ritual magic, and alchemy*. Spearman.

McTaggart, L. (2008). *The intention experiment: Using your thoughts to change your life and the world*. Simon and Schuster.

Meadow, M. J., & Kahoe, R. D. (1984). *Psychology of religion: Religion in individual lives*. New York: Harper & Row

Merlin, S. (2023). Psi-entific approach to post-mortem survival: Employing the multiple sources of psi (MSoP) and discarnate psi hypotheses in the calculation of a Drake-S equation. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 42(1), 43-71. https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2023.42.1.43

Midilli, T. S., & Eser, I. (2015). Effects of Reiki on post-cesarean delivery pain, anxiety, and hemodynamic parameters: A randomized, controlled clinical trial. *Pain Management Nursing*, 16(3), 388-399. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmn.2014.09.005

Moga, M. M. (2014). Magnetic field activity during psychic healing: A preliminary study with Healing Touch prac-

titioners. *Journal of Nonlocality*, 3(1).

Moga, M. M. (2017). Exceptional experiences of healers: A survey of healing touch practitioners and students. *Journal of the Exceptional Experiences and Psychology*, 5, 24-35.

Moga, M. M., & Bengston, W. F. (2010). Anomalous magnetic field activity during a bioenergy healing experiment. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 24(3), 397-410.

Morris, R. J, & Hood, R. W., Jr. (1981). The generalizability and specificity of intrinsic/extrinsic orientation. *Review of Religious Research*, 22, 245-254. https://doi.org/10.2307/3509674

Nash, C. B. (1982). Hypnosis and transcendental meditation as inducers of ESP. *Parapsychology Review*, 13(1), 19–20.

O'Keeffe, C., Houran, J., Houran, D. J., Dagnall, N., Drinkwater, K., Sheridan, L., & Laythe, B. (2019). The Dr. John Hall story: a case study in putative "Haunted People Syndrome". *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 22(9), 910-929. https://doi.org/10.1080/13674676.2019.1674795

Owen, I., & Sparrow, M. (1976). *Conjuring up Phillip: An adventure in psychokinesis*. Harper & Row.

Palmer, J., Khamashta, K., & Israelson, K. (1979). An ESP ganzfeld experiment with transcendental meditators. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, 73(4), 333–348.

Peterson, J. (2016). *The sworn book of Honorious: Liber inratus honorii*. Ibis Press.

Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1984). The effects of involvement on responses to argument quantity and quality: Central and peripheral routes to persuasion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 46(1), 69-81. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.46.1.69

Pickering, W. S. F. (2009). *Durkheim's sociology of religion: Themes and theories*. ISD LLC. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1cgf6sv

Radin, D. (2018). *Real magic: Ancient wisdom, modern science, and a guide to the secret power of the universe*. Harmony.

Rao, A., Hickman, L. D., Sibbritt, D., Newton, P. J., & Phillips, J. L. (2016). Is energy healing an effective non-pharmacological therapy for improving symptom management of chronic illnesses? A systematic review. *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice*, 25, 26-41. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ctcp.2016.07.003

Rao, P. K., & Rao, K. R. (1982). Two studies of ESP and subliminal perception. *The Journal of Parapsychology*, 46(3), 185-207.

Regardie, I. (1995). *The golden dawn*. Llewellyn.

Regardie, I. (2016a). *The middle pillar: The balance between mind and magic*. Llewellyn.

Regardie, I. (2016b). *The tree of life: An illustrated study in magic*. Llewellyn.

Rock, A. J., Denning, N. C., Harris, K. P., Clark, G. I., & Misso, D. (2015). Exploring holotropic breathwork: An empirical evaluation of altered states of awareness and patterns of phenomenological subsystems with reference to transliminality. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 47(1) 3-24.

Rock, A. J., Houran, J., Tressoldi, P. E., & Laythe, B. (2023). Is biological death final? Recomputing the Drake-S equation for postmortem survival of consciousness. *International Journal of Consciousness Studies*, *42*, 9-26. https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2023.42.1.9

Sell, C., Möller, H., & Taubner, S. (2018). Effectiveness of integrative imagery-and trance-based psychodynamic therapies: Guided imagery psychotherapy and hypnopsychotherapy. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*, 28(1), 90-113. https://doi.org/10.1037/int0000073

Skinner, S. (2014). *Techniques of Graeco-Egyptian magic*. Golden Hoard.

Storm, L. (2023). The dark spirit of the trickster archetype in parapsychology. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 37(4), 665-682. https://doi.org/10.31275/20232715

Simmonds-Moore, C. A., Alvarado, C. S., & Zingrone, N. L. (2019). A survey exploring synesthetic experiences: Exceptional experiences, schizotypy, and psychological well-being. *Psychology of Consciousness: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Advance online publication. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/cns0000165

Smoot Tramont, N. (2023). From 'Baby Doctor' to 'Witch Doctor': A retrospective of Charles Tramont's work with spirit releasement therapy. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 37(4), 724-736. https://doi.org/10.31275/20232825

Staniford, P. (1982). On psi and magic. *Current Anthropology, 23*(3), 348–349. https://doi.org/10.1086/202857

Steinkamp, F. (2005). Forced-choice ESP experiments: Their past and their future. In *Parapsychology in the 21st century: Essays on the future of psychical research* (pp. 124-163).

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33-47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Thalbourne, M. A., & Houran, J. (2000). Transliminality, the Mental Experience Inventory, and tolerance of ambiguity. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 28(5), 853-863. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(99)00143-9

Thalbourne, M. A., & Maltby, J. (2008). Transliminality, thin boundaries, unusual experiences, and tem-

poral lobe lability. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 44, 1617-1623. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2008.01.022

Thalbourne, M. A., Crawley, S. E., & Houran, J. (2003). Temporal lobe lability in the highly transliminal mind. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 35, 1965-1974. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0191-8869(03)00044-8

Thalbourne, M. A., Houran, J., Alias, A. G., & Brugger, P. (2001). Transliminality, brain function, and synesthesia. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 189, 190-192. https://doi.org/10.1097/00005053-200103000-00009

Tobacyk, J. (2004). A revised paranormal belief scale. *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 23, 94-98. https://doi.org/10.24972/ijts.2004.23.1.94

Tobacyk, J. J., & Mitchell, S. A. (1989). A revised paranormal belief scale. *The International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 8(2), 1-8.

Ventola, A., Houran, J., Laythe, B., Storm, L., Parra, A., Dixon, J., & Kruth, J. G. (2019). A transliminal 'dis-ease' model of 'poltergeist agents'. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 83(3), 144-171.

Wahbeh, H., Speirn, P., Pederzoli, L., & Tressoldi, P. (2023). Channelers' answers to questions from scientists: An exploratory study. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 37(3), 348-369. https://doi.org/10.31275/20232907

White, G. (2018). *The chaos protocols: Magical techniques for navigating the new economic reality*. Llewellyn.

Winkelman, M., Ankenbrandt, K. W., Bharati, A., Bourguignon, E., Dundes, A., Eisenbud, J., Goodman, F. D., Hallpike, C. R., Hultkrantz, Å., Jarvie, I. C., Lex, B. W., Long, J. K., Moss, L. W., Preston, R. J., Romanucci-Ross, L., Sebald, H., Sheils, D., Singer, P., & Womack, S. (1982). Magic: A theoretical reassessment [and comments and replies]. *Current Anthropology*. https://doi.org/10.1086/202778

Winkelman, M. J. (1992). *Shamans, priests, and witches: A cross-cultural study of magico-religious practitioners*. Arizona State University.

Zech, N., Hansen, E., Bernardy, K., & Häuser, W. (2017). Efficacy, acceptability, and safety of guided imagery/hypnosis in fibromyalgia – A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *European Journal of Pain*, 21(2), 217-227.

Appendix: Chat GPT Data Analyst Instructions

I am attaching a mostly empty data-set with the following variables:

ESP1.1 ESP1.1C CNC1.1 ESP1.2 ESP1.2C CNC1.2 ESP1.3 ESP1.3C CNC1.3 ESP1.4 ESP1.4C CNC1.4. ESP1.1C, ESP1.2C, ESP1.3C, and ESP1.4c contain the correct answer. For each row I want you to: 1. Randomly select either ESP1.1, ESP1.2, ESP1.3, or ESP1.4 and place a random whole number (1,2,3,4) in the row cell you randomly select. Do this for all rows until you reach row 102. 2. Once the former is completed, look at each row where you placed a random number and compare this number against the corresponding 'correct' answer (for ESP1.1, compare against ESP1.1C, for ESP1.2, compare against ESP1.2C, for ESP1.3, compare against ESP1.3C, and for ESP1.4 compare against ESP1.4C). If the numbers match code 1, and if the numbers do not match, code 0 into two columns to the right of the ESP1.1, ESP1.2, ESP1.3, or ESP1.4 column you selected in each row. Now repeat this process six more times and provide an output and summary of the amount of 1's you obtain.