



PSI AND CREATIVE

IMAGINATION

MARILYN SCHLITZ, PHD

# Bridging Creative Imagination and Psi Phenomena



Historical  
Links



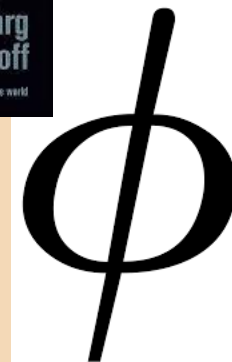
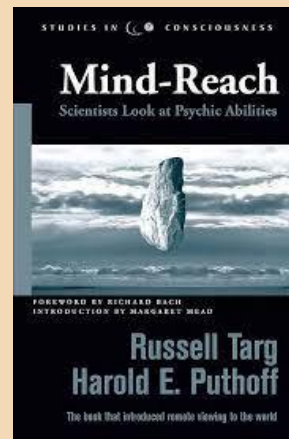
Contemporary  
Research

# On a Personal Note





Wayne State University



Schlitz and Decon, 1979  
Schlitz and Gruber, 1980  
Schlitz and Height, 1981

Many

Variety of thoughts



“When our mind wanders, are we wandering ourselves, or is there something separate that contains the wandering mind?”

~Arnaud Delorme, 2023





## Defining Creativity

- Many facets
- Many definitions

“Creativity is the ability to produce or develop original work, theories, techniques, or thoughts.

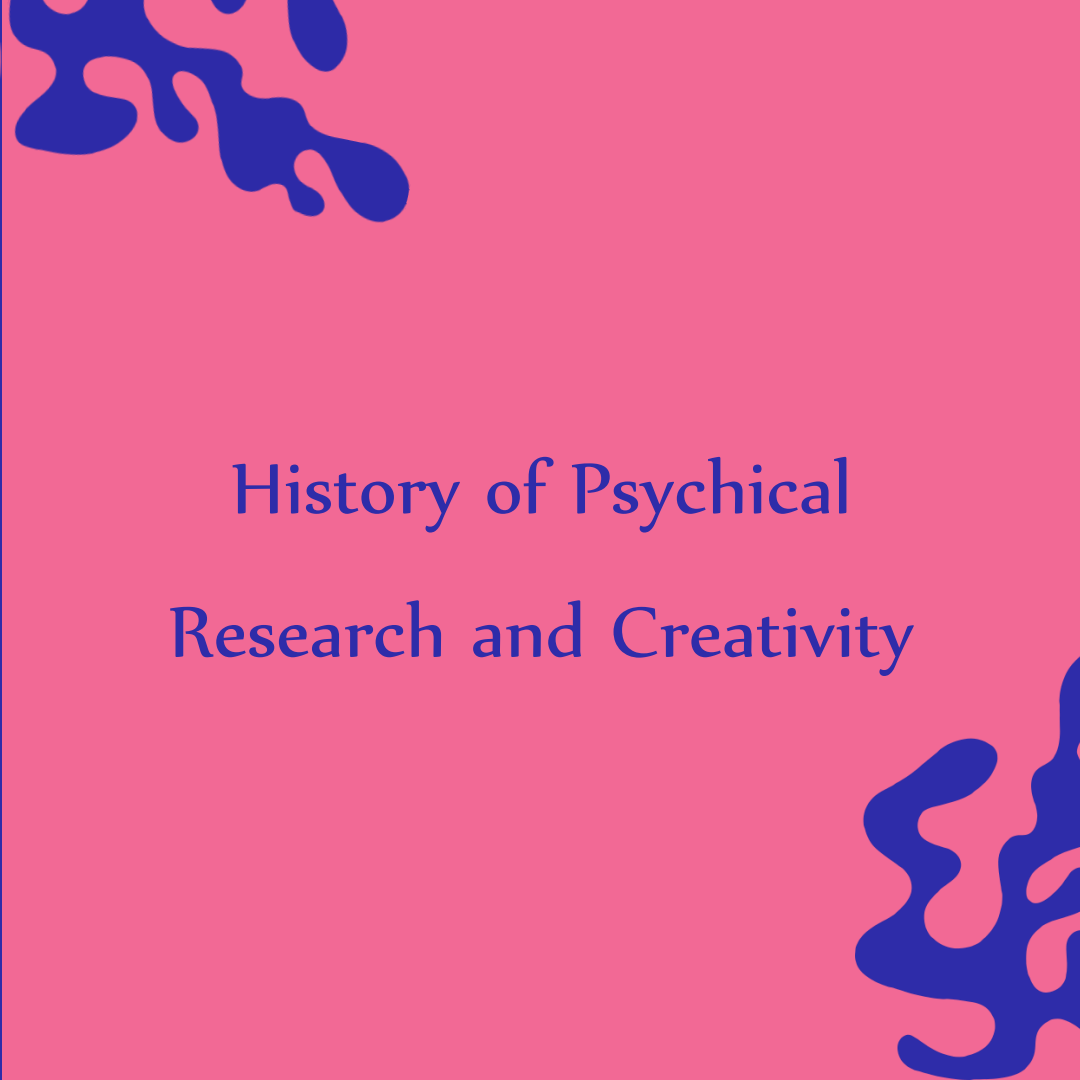
A creative individual typically displays originality, imagination, and expressiveness.

Creative thinking refers to the mental processes leading to a new invention or solution to a problem.”

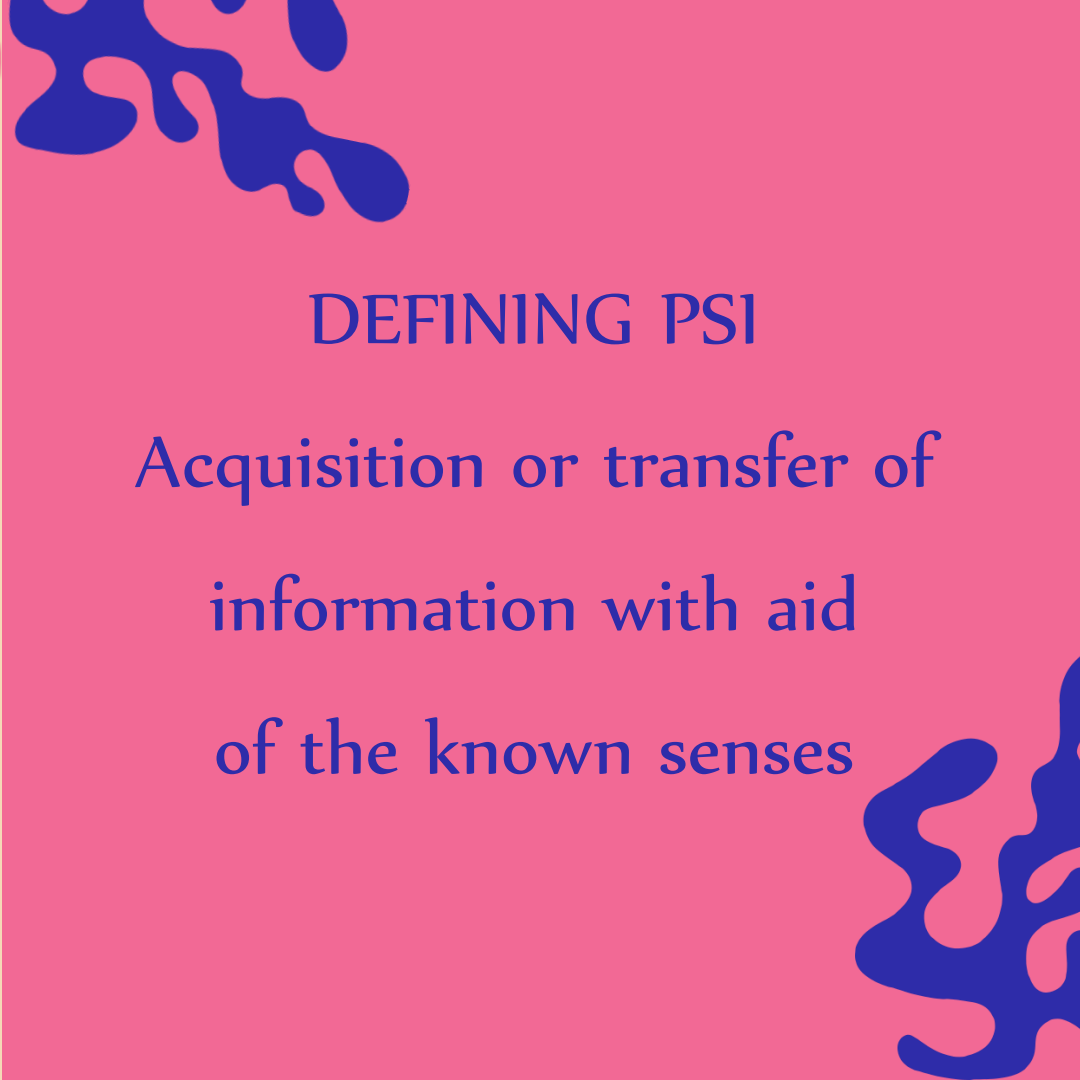
~American Psychological Association







# History of Psychological Research and Creativity



## DEFINING PSI

Acquisition or transfer of  
information with aid  
of the known senses

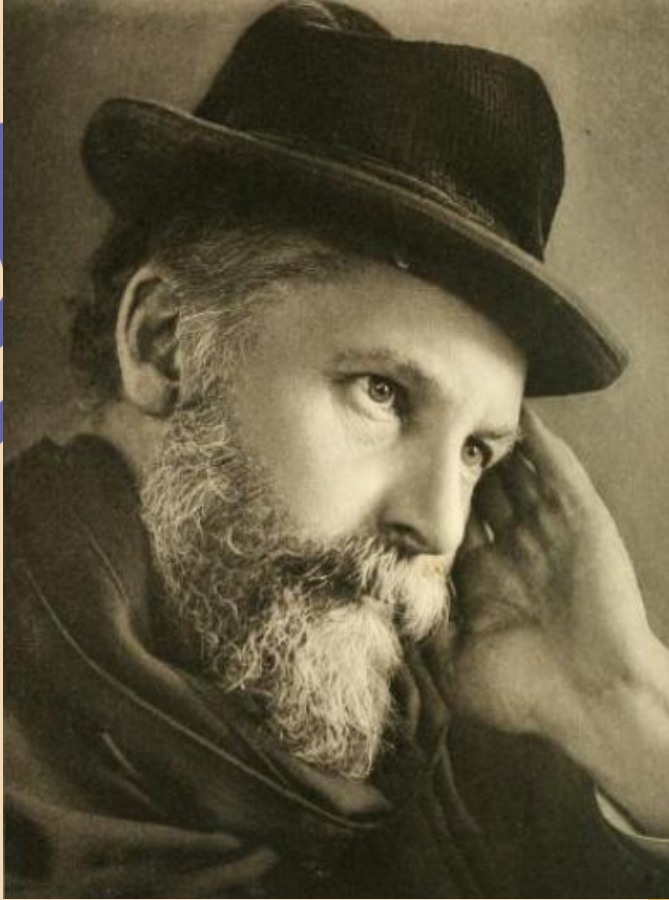
- British Society of Psychical Research

1882

- American Society for Psychical  
Research

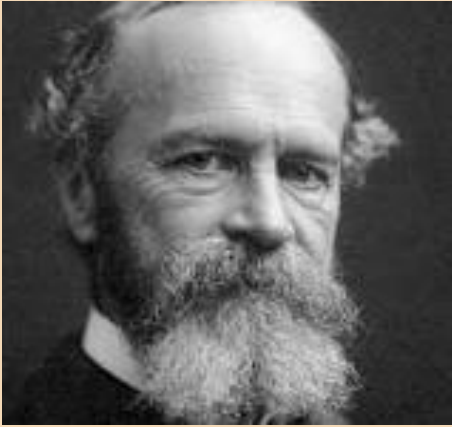
1884

Frederic  
Myers  
(1903)



- One of the first to make a connection between exceptional human abilities, such as genius, and psychic experiences
- Studied spontaneous cases
- Concluded that both are characterized by uprush from subliminal mind to consciousness
- Both reflect impulse to fulfill subliminal materials and outer world
- Mental imagery is a mediating vehicle

# Foundational Influences




William James



Sigmund Freud



Carl Jung

The background features a dark blue field with stylized tulips. On the left, there are two yellow tulips of varying sizes. On the right, there is a large pink tulip. The stems and leaves are rendered in a light yellow color. The text is centered in a white box with a thin black border.

**Unconscious Processing:** Spontaneous reception of information associated with psi shares similarities with the subconscious processes that underlie creative thinking

"Creative powers can often be enhanced by a profound understanding of psychic phenomena. Exploring the depths of the unconscious mind, one can unearth a wellspring of inspiration that transcends the boundaries of conventional thought and propels creativity to new heights."

~ Carl Jung



## Major Observations from Early Psychological Research

1. Need for Relaxation as a prerequisite
2. Shift Attention to Unconscious Mind
3. Once the appropriate state is reached, entire contents of person's world of internal mental images become available

~Taylor, Shadow Culture, 1999



# Many Creative Artists and Writers Report Psi Experiences

Mark Twain

Robert Browning

Robert Schumann

Goethe

Yoko Ono

Taylor Swift

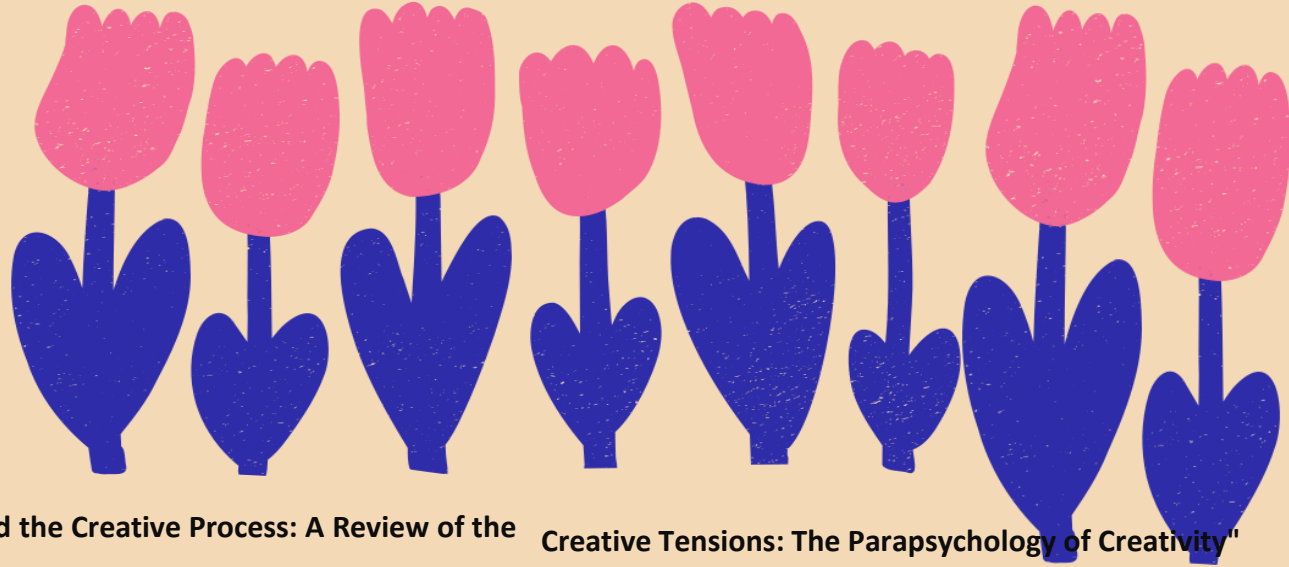


# Highlights of the Science

**"Psi-Conductive States and Creativity: Comparing Hypnosis, Daydreaming, and Psi-Conductive Imagery" (Roney-Dougal & Solfvin, 2006)** - explored effects of different altered states of consciousness, including hypnosis, daydreaming, and psi-conductive imagery, on participants' performance in creative tasks. Findings suggested psi-conductive states may enhance creative thinking and problem-solving abilities.

**"Psi and the Creative Process: A Review of the Literature" (Storm & Thalbourne, 2005)** Comprehensive literature review examines studies investigating relationship between psi experiences and creativity. Discusses methodological issues, theoretical frameworks, and empirical findings from both parapsychological and mainstream psychological research.

**Creative Tensions: The Parapsychology of Creativity" (Irwin, 2003)** - Book provides overview of research on relationship between psi phenomena and creativity, discussing various theoretical perspectives and empirical findings. Explores how anomalous experiences may influence creative process and offers insights into role of intuition, inspiration, and unconscious processes in creativity.





THEATER Lincoln Center

WUW21 @ Lincoln Center

BROADWAY  
DON'T BLOCK THE BOX  
WUW21 @ Lincoln Center

WUW21 @ Lincoln Center

# Ganzfeld Psi Performance Within an Artistically Gifted Population

Schlitz and Honorton, 1992

Use of ASC to Elicit Psi

Results

Ganzfeld 33%

Juilliard 50%

Musicians 75%



# Juilliard Study

Eliminating 2 outliers

- significant correlation of psi and creativity
- Significant correlation in flexibility and elaboration





Creativity often involves seeing things from unconventional angles or perceiving beyond the obvious, similar to the way psi experiences might involve information beyond typical sensory input.



## **Receptive Psi and Creativity:**

Psi experiences might emerge from a broader, receptive mode of consciousness, including openness to unconventional ideas, intuition, and insight.

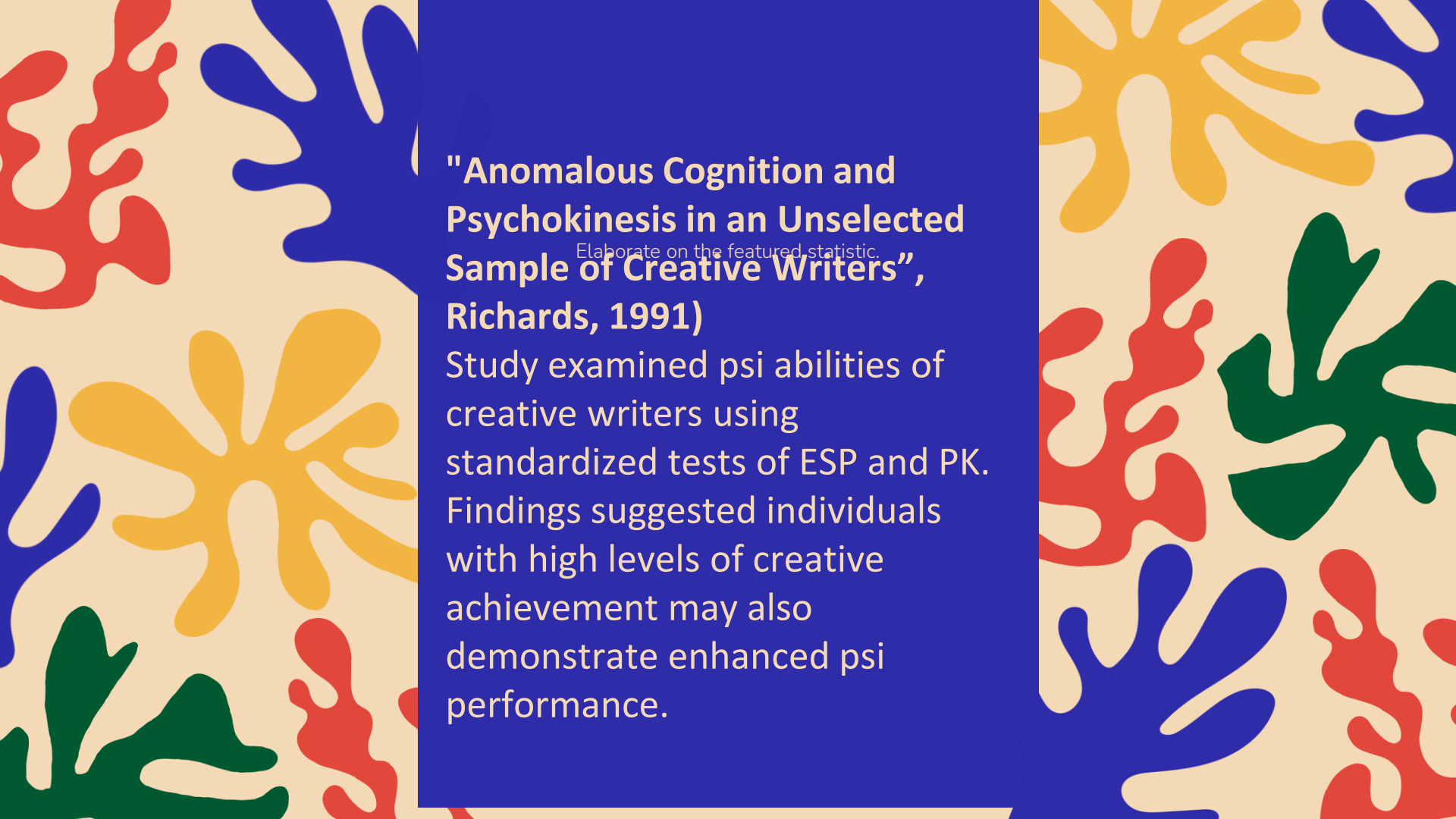




“Creativity and psychic experiences are twin expressions of a dynamic unconscious emotional and instinctual life. “

Murphy, 1963





**"Anomalous Cognition and  
Psychokinesis in an Unselected  
Sample of Creative Writers",  
Richards, 1991)**

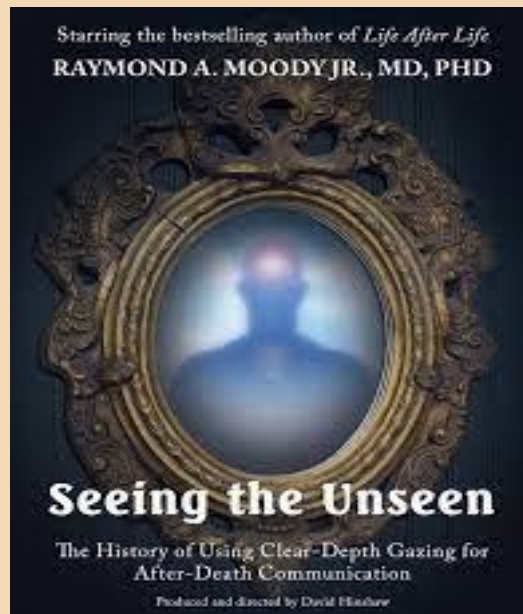
Elaborate on the featured statistic.

Study examined psi abilities of creative writers using standardized tests of ESP and PK. Findings suggested individuals with high levels of creative achievement may also demonstrate enhanced psi performance.



# THE PSYCHOMANTEUM





# FROM GRIEF TO GROWTH:

UNITING ANCIENT WISDOM AND CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGIES TO PROBE GRIEF AND  
ALTERED STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE

## PSYCHOMANTIUM

### BACKGROUND:

This study contributes to the fields of psychology, anthropology, spirituality, and management by investigating transpersonal experiences of grief and bereavement through ancient techniques of gazing into reflective surfaces. This study employed the psychomantium, a sensory deprivation procedure involving focused attention and creative imagination.

Marilyn Schlitz, Dorote Lucci, James W. Thompson, Jr.,  
Jeff Tarrant, Scott Guem, Abeshchik Patel, Penny Zvan.

A Special Thanks to The Bial Foundation  
—A366-2018 G-07748 III, L49994—

### INTRODUCTION

CONTRIBUTING TO THE FIELDS OF PSYCHOLOGY,  
ANTHROPOLOGY, SPIRITUALITY AND MANAGEMENT, BY  
INVESTIGATING TRANSPERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF GRIEF  
AND BEREAVEMENT THROUGH ANCIENT TECHNIQUES  
OF GAZING INTO REFLECTIVE SURFACES, THIS STUDY  
EMPLOYED THE PSYCHOMANTIUM, A SENSORY  
DEPRIVATION PROCEDURE INVOLVING FOCUSED  
ATTENTION AND CREATIVE IMAGINATION.

### • AIMS:

Specifically, the study examined the relationship between absorption and grief in two conditions: a physical psychomantium chamber and a virtual reality (VR) emersion procedure. Both conditions involved guided suggestions to experience invisible others, including departed/loved ones, spirits, and ghostly sensations.

**METHODS:** A total of 103 participants were recruited, and 92 completed pre- and post-measures. Hypothesis 1 posited grief as the dependent variable with absorption held constant based on a prediction that greater benefits for grief would correlate with the depth of experiences. Results revealed that the relationship was statistically significant at the .019 level. Hypothesis 2 examined the differences between the physical psychomantium chamber and virtual reality (VR) conditions using an independent t-test.

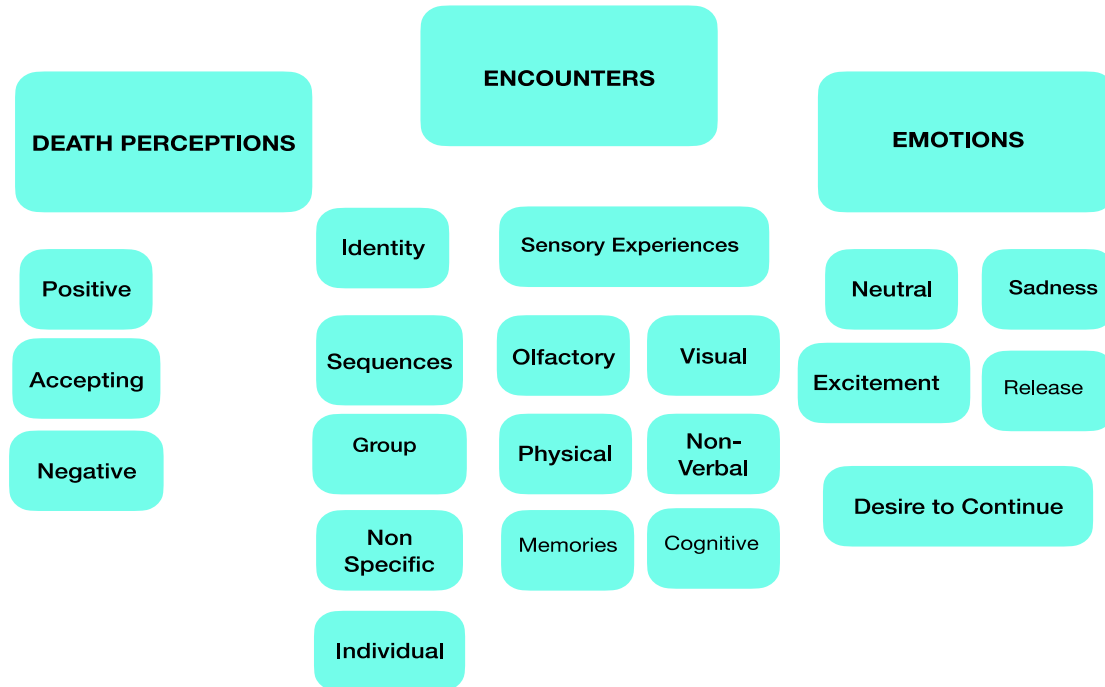
**RESULTS:** Indicated no significant differences between the two conditions for grief and absorption. Moreover, the directions of change for grief and absorption were opposite, with absorption significantly increasing while grief demonstrated no impact. Secondary outcomes involved language use analysis based on journals and interviews. Participants in both conditions exhibited a wide range of experiences, spanning from neutral to profound and moving. A dependent t-test found highly significant changes in positive affect, cognitive insights, and positive emotions ( $p < .001$ ) pre- and post.

**CONCLUSION:** This innovative approach bridges ancient and advanced technologies, providing new avenues for addressing global mental health challenges. Future research will focus on examining talent (absorption) and training (repeated exposure to the VR experience) to gain further insights into the potential applications of the psychomantium in clinical applications, transpersonal psychology, and consciousness studies.

**KEYWORDS:** Grief, Virtual Reality, Consciousness, Psychomantium



# DEATH AWARENESS AND EXPERIENCES IN THE PSYCHOMANTIEM





Engaging Creative  
Imagination to  
Facilitate Contact  
with Invisible Others  
Using Advanced  
Technology

Special Issue, Journal of Management,  
Spirituality and Religion, 2025

# COMMON ELEMENTS OF PSI AND CREATIVITY



MIND WANDERING

SPONTANEOUS EXPERIENCES

UNCONSCIOUS

HIGH SELF-ESTEEM,  
EMPATHY AND SELF-  
UNDERSTANDING

Preparation, Incubation,  
Illumination,

FLEXIBILITY AND EMERSION



Jing Chi, PHD student at  
Sofia, China Program,  
Integral Research Skills  
March, 2024

"...the critical insight for me is the understanding that creativity and genius often lie not in the accumulation of knowledge but in the ability to see beyond the apparent and to connect seemingly unrelated dots in innovative ways."



# LIMITATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

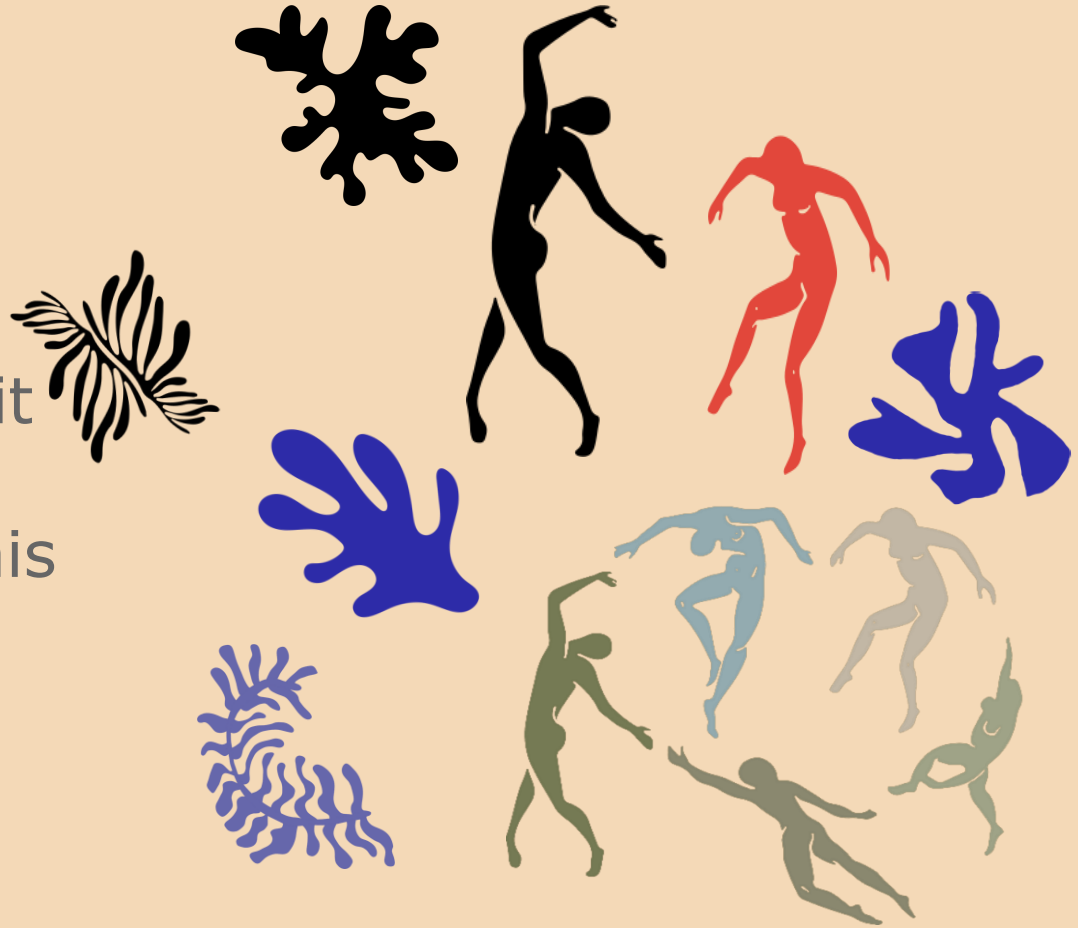


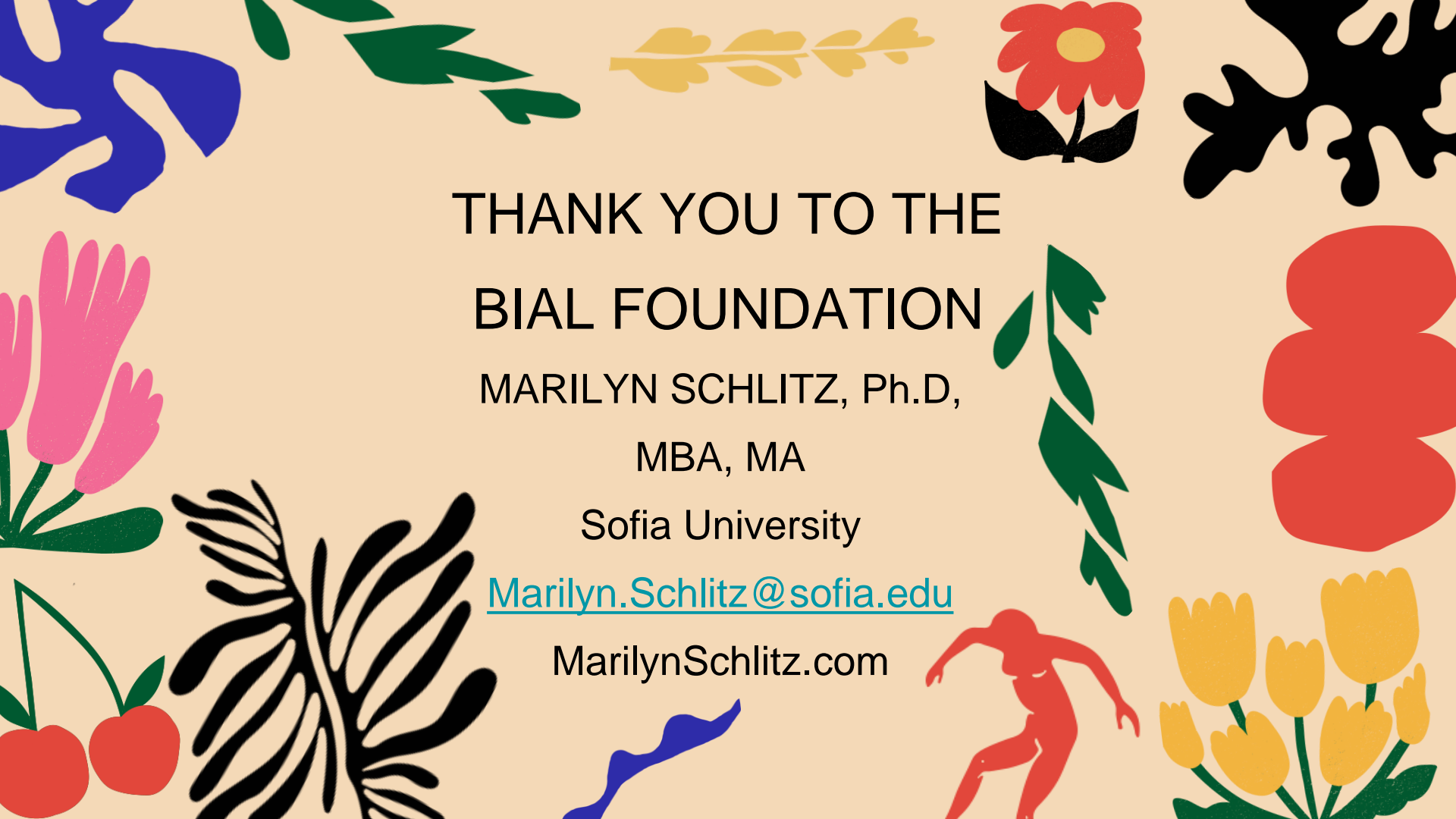
- Study Sizes for Both Topics
- Difficulty Drawing Correlations
- Needs for assessments that cover range of creativity and psi
- Need for Meta-analyses
- Systematic replications with Adversarial Collaborations
- Testable Theories



“Man is in the course of evolution... [and] it may be in his power to hasten his own evolution in ways previously unknown”

~Frederic Myers





THANK YOU TO THE  
BIAL FOUNDATION

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