

Review of: "Re-calling Magical Thinking: Different, yet Connected Views on Magical Thinking"

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There is something interesting in the question of whether and how magical thinking plays a role in how we responded to COVID-19 and are still behaving in the aftermath of the pandemic. However, there is a strongly evidenced connection (not just an unfounded, magical belief) between washing hands (and other proposed precautions) and avoiding contracting the coronavirus. Yes, it is quite possible that these scientifically supported precautions got intermingled with magical thinking and established habits and even rituals that took on a life of their own and continue to be practiced out of superstition. This, however, appears in this article purely as speculation. If there were a qualitative field study, however small, of a specific population, e.g., that provided some evidence, that would really help to make this a contribution to research. It seems that the strongest "evidence" is sourced from the author's personal experience. While I can recognize certain of these behaviors in myself (I actually truly do!), that doesn't make it research.

A decision could (and I believe should) be made to either write this text more strongly and unapologetically as an opinion piece and make a stronger case for whatever the actual case is (which also remains somewhat unclear), or some actual evidence could be added in the form of a study, interviews, experience reports, etc., that would add some actual, new research. Or - which is what I would favor - a mix of both :) Go all in. Make a strong case here for how relevant magical thinking STILL is in our oh-so-science-oriented "modern" world - how we STILL adhere to rituals and superstitions (to a more or less conscious degree) and how that can both support desired behavior (by playing on our emotions and trying to generate fear so we STAY AWAY from each other and not spread the disease), but which can also backfire in the long run when we forget why we behaved in a certain way to begin with and all that remains is the magical thinking that now, when the danger is under control, no longer serves us and isolates us from each other.

The title itself is rather nondescript, and the COVID example appears more as an afterthought than the core of the argument (which is maybe why it landed in the conclusion and it remained a bit fuzzy what the argument is). It is, however, the COVID case that adds something interesting and new here and could be elevated to the main theme, and then it would deserve to become part of the title.