

### Report 3<sup>rd</sup> Workshop CAS-E – IGPP 3./4.7.2024 in Erlangen

IGPP: Dr. Gerhard Mayer, Dr. Andreas Anton, Dr. Wolfgang Fach, Dr. Liane Hofman, Dr. Marc Wittmann; on zoom: Kocku von Stuckrad (Groningen, NL), Cecilia Bastos (Brazil)

CAS-E: Michael Lackner (4.7.), Andreas Nehring, Knut Graw, Birgit Menzel, Bernd-Christian Otto, Darrel Rutkin, Anna Ozhiganova, Kelly Hayes, Kalindi Kokal, Ilia Mozias, Raquel Romberg, Pablo Wright;

Opening remarks:

Andreas Nehring quoted 3 questions by Advisory Board Member Jeffrey Kripal:

1. Do alternative events or anomalous experiences happen at all?
2. If they do happen, can these experiences tell us something about the nature of consciousness or mind?
3. And most radically: Can they tell us something about the nature of nature, that is, about space, time, and matter itself?

,In academic-speak, we are working toward new critical theory that is neither “modern” nor “postmodern,” neither “posthuman” nor “transhuman.” This is neither “anthropology” nor “religious studies” as conventionally construed, along rational or, frankly, historical lines. It is something else, and it comes at a cost. Jeffrey Kripal suggests striving for a new form of imagination.’

Gerhard Mayer offered some **reflections on the relationship between Parapsychology and Anthropology for future cooperation**, historically both share contested fields of research, similarities, overlapping methodologies (multi-method-approach), and related research of both Parapsychology and Anthropology:

- Direct observation in a field situation
- Who is a skilled observer?
- Who is a credible and reliable witness?
- Whose etic, whose emic? Our own emic? What is real, what is paranormal, magical beliefs and practices.
- Anthropology, Psi and Magic Today?
- What can we learn from each other?

Parapsychological research in Early Anthropology:

Spiritists superstitious? – what if these psy phenomena are real?

Animism, séances investigated – fraud or not?

Some phenomena of spiritists were believed to be real, but some unseen human faculty (telepathy)

David Luke: Anthropology and Parapsychology. Still Hostile Sisters in Science? (2010)

Patric Giesler’s Experience in the Field (Umbanda), “Parapsychological Anthropology” (1984)

Sensitization to the roles of fraud, autosuggestion, faulty recall, psychology of witnesses

Clearly distinguishing informant-researcher emics and etics, specifically when it comes to the topic of magic, sorcery, and the paranormal

Parapsychology.

Relevant of the cultural context for the study design – experimental, surveys)

We need ontological flexibility for a better understanding. Gerhard Mayer argues for an opening of the field in future cooperation between CAS-e and IGPP.

1. Thematic Bloc: "Altered states, exceptional experiences, and stable self-transformation over time in contemplative practice."

A cooperative project is on its way. Working title: **Altered states, exceptional experiences, and stable self-transformation over time in contemplative practice**

Application BIAL Foundation (Porto) <https://www.bial.com/com/about-us/our-company/>

Marc Wittmann (IGPP: Experimental and quantitative research and Cecilia Bastos (ex-CAS-e: Qualitative participant observation and participatory fieldwork as anthropological technique)

Cecilia's background: **Self-transformation in spiritual practice**: Qualitative fieldwork, the meanings of learning yoga and meditation, and its implication on the lifestyle of interlocutors

Marc's background: **Altered states of consciousness**: Experimental approach to Meditation, Floatation-REST, Psychedelics

Self-transformation: Questionnaire on awakening (WAKE)

Paranormal phenomena: Experimental approach on Remote viewing, precognition, ganzfeld-psi

2. Thematic Bloc: "Parapsychology in China and Beyond"

A 2<sup>nd</sup> cooperative project is being discussed. Working title: **Diverging Sciences of Healing (The Scientification of Daoism)**, Application for VW-Foundation (originally: Knowledge about Knowledge, now has to be modified for "Political...", due October 2024 – 4 years)

Lennert Gesterkamp (ex-CAS-e and Gerhard Mayer, Michael Nahm (IGPP).

**Lennert Gesterkamp** introduced basic conceptual ideas for the application. Evidence-based Medicine (Western) vs. Traditional Chinese Medicine, complex relations. Policies, decision-making processes, mutual influences.

3. Thematic Bloc: "Therapies, Healing, and Spirits"

First steps for a 3<sup>rd</sup> cooperative project are on their way. Title of a paper Knut Graw and Julia Gyimesi gave at a conference in Halle: **Family Constellation as Liberation Medicine**

Knut Graw (CAS-E):

Wolfgang Fach (IGPP): psychotherapy, experimental psychology, counselling service, long-term systematic analysis of exceptional experiences (ExE). Dissertation „*Das Spektrum des Außergewöhnlichen: Konzeptionelle Ansätze, empirisch-phänomenologische Untersuchungen und plananalytische Fall-studien zur mentalen Repräsentation bei außergewöhnlichen Erfahrungen*“, online: <https://boristheses.unibe.ch/5179/>

Knut Graw:

Wolfgang Fach: Can findings on relationships between ExE and bonding styles contribute to explain the enigma of family constellations?

Wolfgang Fach: Can findings on relationships between ExE and bonding styles contribute?

In this thematic bloc **Liane Hofman (IGPP)** offered a presentation on **“Kundalini as a transcultural phenomenon in psychotherapy and counselling”**. Transcultural facilitators of the Indian Kundalini-practice brought it to the West and has now also caused ‘spiritual crises’ in which context Hofman is confronted with it in her work of the IGPP counselling service. Thesis: Kundalini was a culture-bound syndrome, now has become a transcultural phenomenon. There is an increasing internal transculturality (in clients), not only on a macrosocietal level, but also on an individual level. See also the cultural hybridity of yoga-practitioners.

Discussion: Anthropologists face also in their field-work: trans- and cross-cultural frictions (China, South-America), the notion /conceptions of time and space different in the Global South (more open to non-human beings) than in the Global North; different from capitalist notion of Self; reconnection with ancestors; transgenerational traumas – in postcolonial situation.

#### 4. Thematic Bloc: “Esotericism, the Paranormal, and Society”

An individual cooperative research-project has begun (6 months). Working title: **“Secret Knowledge behind the Iron Curtain. Western-Soviet Interactions in Parapsychology in the 1960s-1980s”**

**Anna Ozhiganova** (CAS-E) presented her project based in large part on material from the archive of Hand Bender and his trips to the Soviet Union.

Secret Knowledge and their agents, scientific laboratories, Intelligence agencies, the military, hidden in nature, esoteric teachings, secret knowledge of foreigners

Secret Knowledge production, Ideology of secrecy – legend-building, Ethics of secrecy, practices of adaptation and resistance.

#### 5. Thematic Bloc: “Astrology and related practices”

Darrel Rutkin: **Astrology and Crisis Counselling**

Rutkin’s suggestion to integrate Astrology into the IGPP counseling service as a diagnostic or even prognostic tool and to investigate its validity in relation to psychological transformation turned out to be difficult and impossible to realize, but it opened up a general discussion about the possible usefulness of including astrological knowledge into counseling service and/or institutions which have data from empirical research on human ExE. Differences between quantitative-based (Rutkin) and qualitative research-methods (Stuckrad: why do astrologers do what they do? Kocku von Stuckrad: What do we actually want to find out? Can we validate or analyse astrological information?

**Final discussion. What next?**

**Conclusions from the workshop:**

- What is it we want to investigate? What is science?
- Useful approach (Mayer): connecting our own personal research-projects with related projects from the other institution;
- One possible next project: a Podcast - family constellation
- Tandem papers

- The Debate problem (Graw): Models of Science as a problem has not been addressed nor discussed. Suggestion for next step in cooperation/workshop: to make this part of the investigation. Michael Nahm has recently published an Essay on Theories of Psi -isms. CAS-E could invite him for a lecture to open up this discussion.
- Include findings and theses of Andreas Anton's research/lecture into the CAS-E discussion: the overlap in the production of fringe – understanding paradigm shifts (Anton's example: UDOs to UAPs), What makes fringe become mainstream? Powerful discourses produce truth;
- The same happens in psychology (Fach) – synaesthesia – lucid dreaming – out-of body experiences have become mainstream. Topic: From fringe to mainstream. Accessible with a naturalistic method.

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**Dr. Gerhard Mayer** is one of the most multidisciplinary colleagues of the IGPP, he has studied psychology, sociology, philosophy, and art history. His research fields are Questions of Cultural Studies relating to the frontier areas of psychology, media research, neoshamanism, magical practices and beliefs, biographical importance and integration of extraordinary experiences, social stigmatization of extraordinary experiences, methods of anomalistic research.

Cracks in everyday life: the reception of films with occult contents, The magician and his world, Shamanism and neoshamanism in German-speaking areas - a field study  
co-edited the volume:

An den Grenzen der Erkenntnis ("At the Frontiers of Insight"), (2028) which will be online accessible from later this year.

**Dr. Marc Wittmann** is a experimental psychologist whose research focuses on Time perception, Altered states of consciousness, Self-consciousness, Drug effects and drug dependence. Wittmann has published two books -in German – on Books: Felt time. A small Psychology of the Perception of Time; and :When time stands still. A small psychology of Frontier experiences. He also runs an English Blog on „Psychology Today“ on “Sense of Time”.

**Dr. Wolfgang Fach:** studied psychology and philosophy, has been leading the counseling service for exceptional experiences, his ground-breaking dissertation defended last year at the University of Bern, will be accessible online in a few days and will provide for the first time empirical material and theoretical analysis of more than 2 thousand documented cases of exceptional experiences from ? years of work in the counseling service. His PhD published in 2024

<https://boristheses.unibe.ch/5179/>

**Dr. Liane Hofman:** her fields of expertise are clinical psychology, psychotherapy, transpersonal psychology and religious psychology. Transcultural exchange process in health concepts, practices of spiritual traditions in Asia. Spiritual crises related to religious practices and exceptional experiences . Polls about spiritual practices and psychotherapy in Germany.

Co-editor of the handbook (2016). Spirituality and spiritual crises ( Spiritualität und Spirituelle Krisen.)

**Dr. Andreas Anton**, youngest colleague of the IGPP-staff, has studied Sociology, History and the Science of Cognition with a dissertation on: “**The Paranormal in Socialism. Heterodox Knowledge, experience and practices in the GDR**” (2018 Logos), “in the Shadow/Beyond Scientism” DFG research project at Freiburg University, reconstructing the discourse, dealing with the Paranormal

(Astrology, parapsychology, magical healing, extraordinary experiences and practices) under the conditions of state socialism.

In the past years, Andreas Anton has directed his attention to the very popular, and now ever more hot topic of the extraterrestrial Paranormal UFOs – now called UAPs. He has spoken up in numerous media-presentations on radio and TV on this hot topic, and, at the end of last year, published a special volume of the journal of Anomalistics: on “Extraterrestrial Intelligence and UAP. Questions, Discourses, Perspectives”.