



CAS-E

Alternative Rationalities and
Esoteric Practices from a Global Perspective

CAS-E Newsletter 03/2024

CAS-E undertakes the investigation of the apparent persistence of practices aimed at predicting, controlling, managing, and manipulating contingent life events, despite social and cultural discourses that delegitimize them. CAS-E opens up a global network of research on such practices from a transcultural perspective by bringing together researchers and research projects from all over the world. With this newsletter, we are happy to introduce some of the people from our CAS-E network, the research and the events taking place at CAS-E, our CAS-E blog and publications.



Network

People



Dr Abimbola A. Adelakun

CAS-E Fellow Abimbola Adelakun studies the performance of "violent" prayers and their animating effects in the Nigerian polity. Abimbola Adelakun wants to provide perspectives that demonstrate the meaning and significance of what people do when they pray these prayers.



Dr Stefanie Burkhardt

Stefanie Burkhardt is one of the CAS-E Research Coordinators. She is interested in the intersections of religion and literature, in particular imagination and narrative world making. Her current research focuses on the entangled histories of "figures of the undead" in West African and Euro-American cultures.



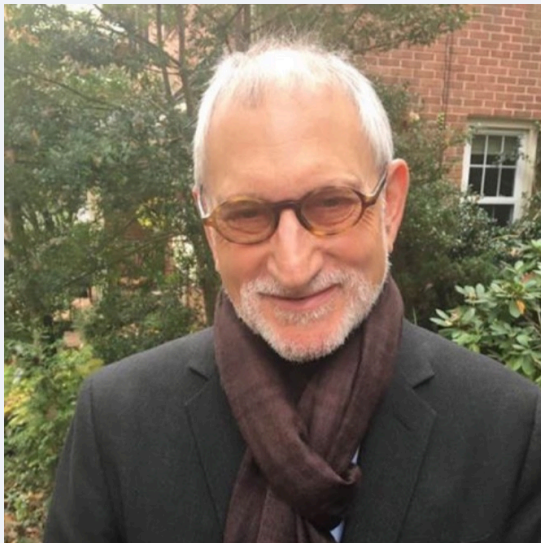
Dr Kalindi Kokal

To CAS-E Fellow Kalindi Kokal exploring the study of law through an interdisciplinary lens unfolds the many avenues for and of justice. At CAS-E, Kalindi Kokal delves into the meanings that rituals, performance and emotion lend to justice as it evolves in the central Himalayan region of India.



Prof Kelly E. Hayes

CAS-E Permanent Fellow Kelly E. Hayes is interested in what gets left out of the category "religion" and why. Her latest book, [*Spirits of the Space Age: The Imagined World of Brazil's Valley of the Dawn*](#) came out in March 2024.



Prof Paul Stoller

In May 2024, CAS-E Permanent Fellow Paul Stoller hosted an international group of scholars for his second annual CAS-E "Weaving the World" ethnographic writing workshop. In the following months, he presented lectures in Bayreuth, Prague and Berlin.

[More CAS-E People](#)



News

Launch of CAS-E Podcast



CAS-E Podcast First Episode: "Astrology"

CAS-E Director Michael Lackner in conversation with Kocku von Stuckrad, Darrel Rutkin, and Christof Niederwieser

We are proud to announce the launch of the CAS-E Podcast, a project designed to explore and discuss various topics in the study of esotericism.

Join us in our first episode, where CAS-E Director Michael Lackner, Kocku von Stuckrad and Darrel Rutkin—two historians of science, and Christof Niederwieser—a very successful practitioner—delve into the history and foundations of astrology, providing a comprehensive introduction to the core concepts that shape our outlook on astrology today.

Our podcast is available on [Spotify](#), [YouTube](#) and [YouTube Music](#).

Don't forget to subscribe to our podcast to stay updated on future episodes!

CAS-E welcomes new Associated Director



Prof. Dr. Giovanni Maltese, Professor of Religious Studies and Intercultural Theology, joins our team as CAS-E Associated Director

Giovanni Maltese is Professor of Religious Studies and Intercultural Theology at the FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg. Maltese's interdisciplinary research focuses on the interplay of religion, politics, and society, addressing questions such as: How do discourses on religion, religious practices, and institutions influence societal and political processes, and how do these processes, in turn, affect scholarly interests and categories and subsequently religious actors? Maltese has authored two books and more than twenty articles and book chapters on contemporary Pentecostalism, Evangelicalism, populism, and right-wing authoritarianism, as well as on conceptualizations of Islam, mysticism, religion(s), and gender in early twentieth-century South and Southeast Asia.

[Read here](#) for an interview with Giovanni Maltese in German.



Recap

CAS-E Workshop "Healing Ecologies and Medical Diversity: Ethnographic Approaches to Wellbeing"



WORKSHOP HEALING ECOLOGIES AND MEDICAL DIVERSITY

Ethnographic Approaches to Wellbeing

12–15 June 2024

Sapienza Università di Roma

Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia

Aula Chabod, 3rd floor

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS:

- Elisabeth Hsu
- Fiona Bowie
- David Napier
- Mustapha Gudaji and Conerly Casey

Convened by:
Emily Pierini
Paul Stoller
Conerly Casey

ETHNOGRAPHIC SONGWRITING WORKSHOP

- Kristina Jacobsen

Organized in collaboration between:

HEAL Network for the Ethnography of Healing

Marie Curie Fellowship THETRANCE-Transnational Healing: Therapeutic Trajectories in Spiritual Trance

Sapienza University of Rome - PhD Programme in History, Anthropology, Religions

CAS-E Center for Advanced Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences on Alternative Rationalities and Esoteric Practices from a Global Perspective, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg (FAU)



Funded by
the European Union



CAS-E
Alternative Rationalities and
Esoteric Practices from a Global Perspective

Workshop organized by CAS-E Permanent Fellow Paul Stoller and CAS-E Alumni Conerly Casey in cooperation with Emily Pierini (Sapienza Università di Roma)

From June 12 to 14, scholars gathered at Sapienza Università di Roma to discuss "healing" in the form of diverse healing practices—in particular "esoteric" and "alternative"—across social and cultural borders. Addressing healing and healing practices as well as well-being, the workshop tackled and covered an important topic and discourse ever-present in the work and research conducted at CAS-E. We are looking forward to future collaborations.

[Read here](#) for more information on the workshop.



Media

CAS-E Blog



Enemies from Within: Love Magic & Intra-female Violence in Malay Polygyny

by Nurul Huda Mohd. Razif

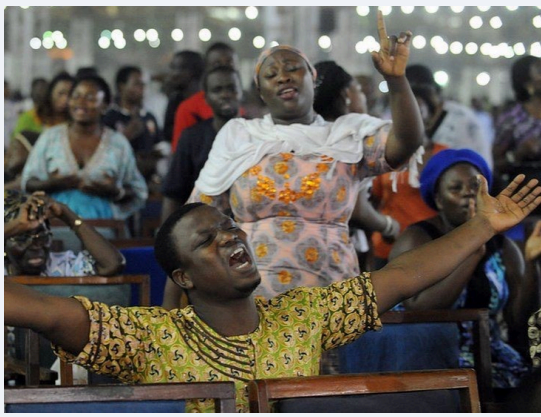
[Go to blog post.](#)



Healing Stories

by Paul Stoller

[Go to blog post.](#)



“Violent Prayers” in Nigerian Pentecostal Churches

by Abimbola Adelakun

[Go to blog post.](#)



Thoughts arising from screening Li Manshan: Portrait of a Folk Daoist

by Stephen Jones

[Go to blog post.](#)



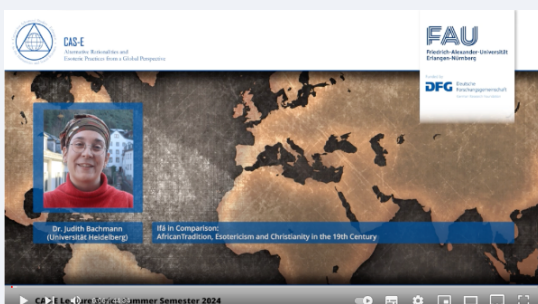
Ethnographic Travelogues Through the Argentinian Chaco Contemporary Shamanism: Between Healing, Power, and Tradition

by Pablo Wright

[Go to blog post.](#)

CAS-E Blog

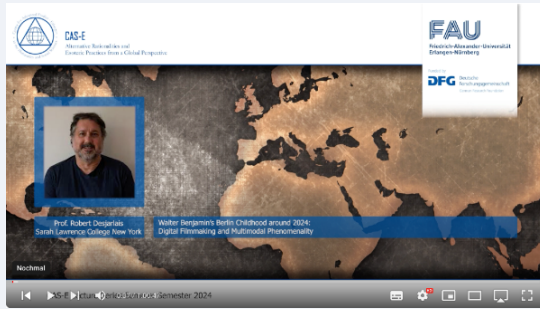
CAS-E YouTube



Ifá in Comparison: African Tradition, Esotericism and Christianity in the 19th Century

Lecture by Judith Bachmann, June 18, 2024

[Watch on YouTube.](#)



Walter Benjamin's Berlin Childhood around 2024: Digital Filmmaking and Multimodal Phenomenality

Lecture and Screening by Robert Desjarlais, April 16, 2024

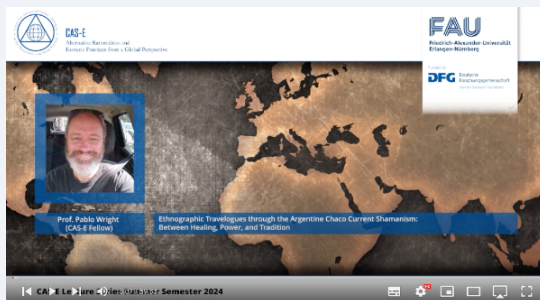
[Watch on YouTube.](#)



Exhibiting Gaian Animism: How Curators Are Fusing Esotericism, Science, Spirituality, and Promoting Environmental Conservation, at Art & Science Museums Around the World

Lecture by Bron Taylor, April 23, 2024

[Watch on YouTube.](#)



Ethnographic Travelogues Through the Argentine Chaco Current Shamanism: Between Healing, Power, and Tradition

Lecture by Pablo Wright, April 30, 2024

[Watch on YouTube.](#)

CAS-E YouTube

CAS-E Podcast



Episode 1: Astrology

by Michael Lackner with Kocku von Stuckrad, Darrel Rutkin, and Christof Niederwieser

[Listen to the episode on Spotify.](#)

CAS-E Podcast



Events

Lecture Series

During the semester, CAS-E hosts a weekly lecture series, **every Tuesday, 6.15 pm EST** (occasionally also at other times) with presentations by CAS-E Fellows and guests.

Link for virtual attendance: <https://fau.zoom.us/j/63672581746>

Lecture Series Summer Semester 2024

Upcoming Lectures

16.07.2024

Dr. Darrel Rutkin (CAS-E Fellow), "Marsilio Ficino's Theurgical Astrology: Astrological Theory and Practice at the Root of Modern Esoteric Practices"

Please find the **extended program including the abstracts** [here](#).

Past Lectures

09.07.2024

Dr. Stefanie Burkhardt (CAS-E), "Literal Ghosts: African Narratives and Religious Experience as Tools for a Critical Expansion of the 'Spectral Turn'"

16.04.2024

Prof. Robert Desjarlais (Sarah Lawrence College, New York), "Walter Benjamin's Berlin Childhood around 2024: Digital Filmmaking and Multimodal Phenomenality"

23.04.2024

Prof. Bron Taylor (University of Florida), "Exhibiting Gaian Animism: How Curators Are Fusing Esotericism, Science, Spirituality, and Promoting Environmental Conservation, at Art & Science Museums Around the World"

30.04.2024

Prof. Pablo Wright (CAS-E Fellow), "Ethnographic Travelogues Through the Argentine Chaco Current Shamanism: Between Healing, Power, and Tradition"

07.05.2024

Dr. Nurul Huda Mohd. Razif (University of Bergen), "Enemies from Within: Love Magic, Sorcery & Intra-female Violence Among Co-Wives in Malay Polygyny"

14.05.2024

Dr. Stephen Jones, "Li Manshan: Portrait of a Folk Daoist (film screening and discussion)"

28.05.2024

Prof. Abimbola Adedokun (CAS-E Fellow), "Die in the Name of Jesus!: The Animating Performances of 'Violent' Prayers"

04.06.2024

Dr. Kalindi Kokal (CAS-E Fellow), "Mystical Regimes of Order: Ritualistic Practices and Conflict Resolution in Everyday Uttarakhand"

18.06.2024

Dr. Judith Bachmann (Universität Heidelberg), "Ifá in Comparison: African Tradition, Esotericism and Christianity in the 19th Century"

19.06.2024

Prof. Dr. Helmut Zander (Université de Fribourg), "How to Globalize a Quintessentially German Practice? Anthroposophy in the Vortex of Globalization"

25.06.2024

Prof. Paul Stoller (West Chester University, CAS-E Permanent Fellow), "Healing Stories"

02.07.2024

Prof. Dr. Jens Schlieter (Universität Bern), "Esoteric Dimensions of Buddhist Meditation: Reaching Out to Transform Other Peoples' Mind"

You can watch the **recordings of passed lectures** on our [CAS-E YouTube channel](#).

The CAS-E winter semester 2024/25 lecture series program will be online soon!

More CAS-E Events



Publications

Articles

Bastos, Cecilia (2024). "Yoga, emotion, and behaviour: becoming conscious of habitual social roles," in *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 1–19.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13537903.2024.2347048>

Hirmer, Monika (2024). "Editorial: Introducing a New, Radically Inclusive, Decolonial Knowledge Landscape," in *Decolonial Subversions* 2023-2024, Special Issue Vernacular Cultures of South Asia, 1-12.

http://decolonialsubversions.org/docs/pdfs/2024/1.1_Hirmer_Editorial.pdf

Ladeira, Thaís Assis and Cecilia dos Guimarães Bastos (2024). "Life of Yoga and Neo-Hinduism: Identities and Belongings," in *Sociologia & Antropologia* 14 (01). <https://doi.org/10.1590/2238-38752024v14111>

Lennert Gesterkamp (2024). "Wang Ximeng Qianli jiangshan tu zhongde xiuxing gushi 王希孟《千里江山图》中的修行故事," (Wang Ximeng's A Thousand Miles of Streams and Mountains and its Story of Daoist Self-Cultivation), in *Meishu daguan 《美术大观》* 3(2024), 29-40.

Book Contributions

Menzel, Birgit (2023). "Vasily V. Nalimov—A Scientist, Philosopher and 'Mystical Anarchist' from Komi," in Manon Hedenborg White and Tim Rudbøg (eds), *Esotericism and Deviance*. Boston: Brill, 225–242.

Stoller, Paul (2024). "Eye and Mind Revisited: the Work of Art in Anthropology," in Devaka Premawardhu and Don Seeman (eds), *Between Life and Thought: Existential Anthropology and the Study of Religion* (Chapter 2). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Stoller, Paul (forthcoming July 2024). "A Parable of the Footbridge: Creativity and Change in the In-Between," in Bruce Kapferer and Marina Gold (eds), *Egalitarian Dynamics: Liminality and Victor Turner's Contribution to the Understanding of Socio-historical Process*. London and New York: Berghahn Books, 48-62.

Stoller, Paul (forthcoming July 2024). "Jabes Among Songhay Sorcerers," in Eva von Roekel and Fiona Murphy (eds), *A Collection of Creative Anthropologies: Drowning in Blue Light and Other Stories*. New York: Palgrave.

Special Issues

Hirmer Monika (ed) (2024). *Vernacular Cultures of South Asia*. Special issue *Decolonial Subversions* 2023-2024.

http://decolonialsubversions.org/special_issue_2024.html

Rivera Andía, Juan Javier (ed) (2024). *Los ritos ganaderos amerindios cincuenta años después*. Special issue *allpanchis. Revista de Estudios Andinos* 51(93).

<https://revistas.ucsp.edu.pe/index.php/Allpanchis/issue/view/148>

Book Reviews

"Rivera Andía, Juan Javier (2024). "Briggs, Charles L. (2021) *Unlearning. Rethinking Poetics, Pandemics, and the Politics of Knowledge*, Utah State University Press (Denver, CO), ix + 346 pp. \$36.95 pbk," in *Bulletin of Latin American Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/blar.13545>

Rivera Andía, Juan Javier (2024). "Escobar, Arturo. *Pluriversal politics: the real and the possible*. 232 pp., illus., bibliogr. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2020. £22.99 (paper)," in *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 30(2). <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9655.14138>

Exhibition

SURROUNDED BY THE SPIRITS: PAUL STOLLER AND THE SONGHAY JOURNEY TOWARDS WELLBEING

September 29, 2023 – December 1, 2024

Honoring the life work of renowned anthropologist Paul Stoller, Surrounded by the Spirits: Paul Stoller and the Songhay Journey Towards Wellbeing invites us to experience the culture of West Africa, and gain profound insights into holistic healing practices that place us in harmony with the social, natural and spiritual worlds. With rare artifacts from Niger and Ghana, the exhibition examines the varied healing practices of the Songhay people of Niger—including spirit possession, witchcraft and divination, Islamic religious devotion, and traditional medicine. A second retrospective gallery looks at the life of Stoller, who trained as a Songhay sorcerer's apprentice, conducted urban ethnography among the West African diaspora, and is internationally recognized for his evocative and accessible writing style. A professor of anthropology at West Chester University for his entire career, Stoller is the author of over 15 books and the recipient of numerous awards including the Anders Retzius Medal given by the King of Sweden, the highest honor in anthropology.

Attend the exhibition virtually: <https://www.wcupa.edu/sciences-mathematics/anthropologySociology/museum/surrounded-by-the-spirits.aspx>

More CAS-E Publications



DFG Kollegforschungsgruppe „Alternative Rationalities and Esoteric Practices from a Global Perspective“

Hartmannstr. 14, 91052 Erlangen



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Funded by



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